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BRITAIN'S TITLE IN SOUTH AFRICA



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BRITAIN'S TITLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

OR

THE STORY OF CAPE COAST ONLY TO
THE DAYS OF THE GREAT TREK

BY

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PREFACE

ON the outbreak of the present war in South Africa, I was led, like many other Britons, no doubt, to inquire what the character of British rule in that region had been from the beginning. The right which Briton or Boer may claim to control the future of South Africa must certainly depend, in the conflicting circumstances of the case, on the work he has done in the past and the title it has earned for him to continue that work in the future. In the present contest no lesser issue than the destinies of all South Africa and the kind of civilisation under which its mixed population, Dutch, British, and coloured, are to live is involved. No superficial question of the rights of a suzerain or the name of a republic must be allowed to disguise the real nature of the struggle, or excuse any one from examining the record of both parties before deciding on what is only the latest phase of a conflict that is more than a hundred years old.

It was with the view of getting some light on this question that I turned to what is generally recognised as the standard history of South Africa, a work in five volumes by George M. Theal, of the Cape

Colonial Civil Service. That is his large work on the subject, but he has also published some minor works, amongst which are a short popular history of South Africa, published in 1894, in the *Story of the Nations* series, and a history written in Dutch, *Geschiedenis van Zuid-Africa*, which with the exception of some chapters of special interest to the Dutch, is generally, word for word, the same as the volume in his *Story of the Nations* series. Like many of my countrymen, I suppose, I had always been taught to believe, and from what I had myself seen and examined, I was ready to believe, that British rule, while it had not of course been exempt from errors, had been in the main distinguished by its fairness and justice, and by liberal methods of administration meant to further the moral and economic development of the countries under that rule. The reader of Dr. Theal's works will hear little in support of such ideas. From his three histories I received only a painful impression of misrule and incapacity, and even of arrogance and tyranny on the part of the British Government ; it was nothing apparently but meddling and muddling, deliberate neglect of the feelings of the "man of the spot" (who of course is always wise and right), and no single thread of moral wisdom or political forecast running through it all, that the historian at least had any eyes for.

It happened, however, that Dr. Theal had been good enough to send to the library of the University on whose staff I have the honour to be, a set of the records of Cape Colony, as far as they have yet been

published, consisting of a mass of original documents, letters private and official, reports, investigations, census returns and such like, from which, with the help of other contemporary evidence such as may be had in the literature of that time, one may be able to form an independent judgment on the early period at least of British rule in South Africa. After a study of those materials I am convinced that Dr. Theal is by no means the safest of guides in this part of the Empire's history ; it even seems to me that he has laboured to darken the British side of it ; he has passed lightly or in silence over the characteristic merits of British rule, especially when tried by the standards of the times of which he is speaking ; he has misunderstood or misrepresented its highest traditions, he has unfairly emphasised its defects and made as little as possible even of the economic and industrial advantages which it undoubtedly conferred on South Africa. And he has done this for the sake of setting the history of a special class of Boers in the best light, and of building up traditions of Boer history, which are certainly at variance both with these records and a common-sense analysis of the facts. The problem of ruling and developing South Africa has had various phases, all of them difficult enough, but Dr. Theal has saved himself all trouble of seeking for the moral or economic principles involved in it by the easy application of one principle, namely, that the Briton was always in the wrong and the Boer always in the right. I have really been unable to discover any other organising principle in his work.

I may add that it did not lessen my suspicion of the spirit that inspired Dr. Theal's histories when I learned from the preface to his history, written in the Dutch language, that his collaborator in these historical researches for a number of years had been Mr. F. W. Reitz, the present secretary of the Transvaal, then President of the Orange Free State. I am inclined to doubt if any history in which Mr. Reitz had a hand would be a fair and impartial account of British rule in South Africa. At any rate, I hope I have been able to show in the following pages that the views of events given by Dr. Theal, that "recognised authority in the history of South Africa," as Mr. Bryce calls him, are to be received, in general, with great caution.

This work, although now cast into the form of an independent history, was originally only a review of the important points in Dr. Theal's representation of British rule in Cape Colony, and part of a series of lectures delivered at a conference of Alumni. I have, however, developed the topics sufficiently to present a connected view of the political history of the colony from its occupation by the British to the time of the great trek.

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BRITAIN'S TITLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

I

Character of the Boer Civilisation—The Boer of the Back-Veldt—Capetown a Hundred Years Ago—Willem Sluyter, the Boers' Classic.

HOLLAND was at its highest strength and vigour as a naval and colonial power when the Dutch East India Company, about the middle of the seventeenth century, sent an expedition to occupy the Cape of Good Hope. The aim of the Company was nothing more than to secure a fine strategic position on the ocean route to the Indies, and a provisioning station for their fleets on their long voyages to and from the spice islands of the East. For the latter purpose a limited number of colonists, Dutch peasants of the poorest class, were encouraged to plant gardens and set up for themselves in the vicinity of the garrison ; and the number of cultivators was increased every now and then by a Dutch soldier or foreign mercenary

in the Company's service, who obtained his discharge with permission to join the ranks of the colonists. The new settlers soon began to drive the native Hottentot clans, the Kaapmans and Cochoquas of those days, from their old pasturage grounds in the neighbourhood of the settlement, and the first of those wars between white man and black for the possession of the soil arose. Yet in those earliest days, the racial feeling of the Dutch was not so fierce against the native as it afterwards became ; and the name of Peter van der Stael, official Comforter of the Sick, is quoted at need by the Dutch Reformed Church as that of a missionary who in 1660 taught Hottentots and slaves the principles of Christianity.

The economic and social development of the new settlement was slow and of a peculiar type. The character of the climate and the early introduction of slaves (1658) made the burgher averse to manual labour, and, like all slave-owners, he became indolent as regards industrial development. The want of all the ordinary evidences of civilisation, of bridges or boats for fording the rivers, of made roads and sign-posts, made a disagreeable impression on the traveller, and irritated him with difficulties to which the Boer had grown accustomed. Except in the vicinity of Cape-town and in a few fertile valleys like Drakenstein and the Paarl, where a class of small freehold farmers produced corn, wine and fruits, there was little cultivation

of the land. Even in the Cape District, Barrow tells us not more than a fifteenth of the soil was under tillage,¹ and while the corn and wine Boers in this part of the country were not wanting in industry and shrewdness, their methods were rough and defective. Their plough was a huge wooden instrument that required eight horses or a dozen oxen to drag it through the ground, and from the defects of its construction was not unfrequently travelling along the top of it; their seed was carelessly sown, about a bushel and a half to the acre, and the use of manure was hardly known. Yet when there was water near, the Dutch agriculturist received a plentiful return for very little labour, and was quite contented to do as his fathers had done before him. A good authority remarks that the Dutch farmer with all his defective methods generally got as much out of the ground as his English neighbour, his long experience of the country counting for much. "The old Dutchmen had more under their nightcaps than most people gave them credit for."²

¹ John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of South Africa*, vol. ii. p. 340. Barrow is the chief authority for the period during the first British occupation, 1795—1803. He is supreme in statistical and economic information, trustworthy as to facts, but harsh and unsympathetic in his delineation of the Boers.

² Wilberforce Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, p. 176. Bird was many years in the Civil Service there; a cool, unprejudiced observer, of somewhat limited official range.

But the class of small freehold farmers, the wine and corn Boers, as they were called, existed mainly in the district near Capetown, or at most sixty to seventy miles away, where the roads to the Capetown market, though not very good, were still passable for the huge Cape waggon drawn by twelve or fourteen oxen. As the Dutch colonists increased in numbers and found their way over the mountains into the highlands of the interior, or spread eastward along the slopes and valleys of the coast, they became more vagrant and unsettled in their way of life. At Stellenbosch or Hottentots' Holland the Boer was an agriculturist producing wheat or wine, but once over the great mountain ranges he became a half-nomadic breeder of cattle and sheep, occupying on a loose squatter tenure enormous tracts of country, from six to ten thousand acres, of which nothing but a mere patch was ever cultivated.

The life of a *vee-Boer* (cattle-Boer, or Boer of the veldt) was necessarily a rude one in these early days. His habitation was often a mere hovel, "four low mud walls with a couple of square holes to admit the light," and slovenly thatched with rushes. And this was often the dwelling of a man who owned several thousand head of cattle and had a band of dependents, slaves and Hottentots, at his command. Before the door stood the cattle kraal with its immense dung-heap, the accumulation of years, which

he never disturbed except to take some of its hardened and trodden mass for fuel, when nothing better was to be had. In dry seasons he had often to roam far with his cattle in search of pasture, the whole family accompanying him and living as comfortably in the great waggon as they would have done at home. He never saw the face of civilisation, except it might be once a year when he made a journey to Capetown to sell the butter and soap made by his women folk, and to purchase coffee, brandy, and the few other articles which he counted amongst the necessities or luxuries of life. He seldom made bread in these days, or grew any corn even for his own use. He used little milk, or butter, or vegetables, but lived chiefly on animal food, especially mutton, great dishes of which, stewed in sheep's tail fat, appeared at his table three times a day.

Such was the life of the *vee-Boer* at this period all along the great line of mountain ranges which then formed the boundary of the colony, from Kamiesberg and the Ouder Roggeveld in the west, along the Nieuwveld to Tarka and Bruintjes Hoogte in the east. It was only after you had crossed Karroo soil, and were nearing Capetown at Roodezand or the Hex River, that the country began to wear a richer aspect, with well-planted orchards and neat substantial farmhouses. Of course there were frontier Boers,

especially in the Sneeuwberg district, who were better off than others, and better housed ; but even in the best cases there was little to represent the comforts and usages of civilised life.

No doubt the descriptions of the passing traveller, even when he is as well informed and observant as Barrow and Thompson were, often give a faulty impression of a people and its way. The hut at Inversnaid, where Wordsworth saw his Highland Girl, was a poor enough dwelling, with a mud floor and a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape by, yet the poet was sufficiently sympathetic to see native worth and even graces of a kind there. But, unfortunately, no Boer poet ever passed by the house of Hans Coetzee of the Hantamberg, or Schalk Burger of the Sneeuwberg, to give us an intelligible report of that life, and do for them what Bret Harte did for as rough a subject, the Californian miner of 1848. Thomas Pringle, it is true, of the *African Sketches*, might have done it, but he was too much occupied in drawing pictures of the Bechuana native and the Bush-boy in the popular style of *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

It is evident that the Boer of the veldt had his compensations. He led an easy and leisurely life, with a band of slaves and Hottentots around him to do what labour was required ; he had plenty of food and tobacco, the latter being grown extensively in

some districts ; he had his *soopie* of gin or brandy, and his regular nap after dinner ; he was fond of killing the wild game which generally abounded in his district, and thought nothing of riding a four or five days' journey for a hunting expedition, or an auction sale, or a sermon, all of which were great social events amongst the farmers of the veldt. On such occasions (bating the sermon of course) his mouth was a little uproarious and apt to disconcert strangers ; but it was no worse perhaps than that of a jolly company of Scotch farmers of the same period, unless indeed some hapless native chanced to excite his anger or contempt, for that was always an element which might give a touch of coarseness or even a tragic turn to life in South Africa.

It was partly the nature of the country that made the Boer of the veldt what he was, an unsettled wanderer, with little attachment to the soil on which he stood and very impatient of the ordinary restraints and responsibilities of life. With the exception of the lowland belt along the coast and some green valleys amongst the mountains, the greater part of his country was a bare parched land all the way to the Orange River, without wood, verdure or running water, the Great Karroo being only a marked example of the whole. Whatever rivers there were shrank during the dry season into mere trickles and muddy pools, and a journey was rarely made into

the interior without the traveller having to hasten anxiously forward in search of water. Destructive blights, hurricanes and occasional plagues of locusts, which literally darkened all the air, helped to make the Boer careless of agriculture and somewhat slovenly, therefore, in the matter of fencing and hedging.

But though little of the land in the interior was available or profitable for tillage at that time, it yielded a pasturage which, even where it was coarse and scanty, as in the Karroo parts, was sufficient to support herds of cattle and sheep on the large scale of grazing, "six acres to a sheep," practised by the Boer. Flocks and herds therefore were the wealth he prized most. "There is the best garden," said old Wentzel Coetzer of the Jarka to Pringle, as he saw his cattle coming home up the valley. And as a prudent grazier, with an eye to water and other things, he did not want any neighbour nearer than six miles away.

It was in these pastoral solitudes that the Boer of the back-veldt grew up, a type evolved from a race of peasants and hardy adventurers of the lower class, thoroughly cut off by their position and habits from all the influences of modern civilisation. The circumstances were highly favourable to the physical development of the Boers, for the interior with all its drawbacks was a very healthy region, with a

singularly pure air, and nights that are cool even in the hot season. But they did not tend to produce a high type of state or of humanity. The population was too widely scattered and too vagrant in its habits. It was a civilisation of backwoodsmen made permanent and universal, without possibility of adequate provision for the education, the social training, or even the effective political government of the inhabitants. As the colony grew in dimensions, occasionally a Dutch Governor would feel uneasy about the future, and make an effort to restrict or circumscribe the roving tendencies of his subjects. In 1743 the Governor-General of the Dutch Indies, van Imhoff, offered to convert on easy terms any burgher's yearly rent into perpetual leasehold ; but this, like other attempts of the same kind, had no effect whatever on tendencies so deeply rooted as to be ineradicable. The Dutch Boer preferred to be a rude lord of the veldt, ruling his household, his slaves and his herdsmen, in half-savage freedom, to the tamer life of a settled community, with its irksome labours and numerous obligations. The rapid expansion of the pastoral farmer caused an increasing demand for slaves, and still more for native servants to look after the numerous stock on these vast and lonely farms. The service of the latter was often more or less compulsory, that of vagrant or criminal Hottentots, or of Bushmen captured in a raid, and practically the only

law known on the farm was that of the master's will. What laws did exist regarding the slave and native servant were Draconian in their severity to the coloured man, from the necessity which the Boer felt of instilling a wholesome dread of his power into this savage and miscellaneous population around him. Any slave, male or female, who should raise a hand, even without weapons, against master or mistress, was condemned to death without mercy ; and the criminal procedure of the colony was full of provisions for examination by torture and excruciating penalties, designed to keep the slaves and native races in subjection.

As a civilisation it had an economic side not unlike that of a Russian or Polish rural aristocracy of the same date ; but what made it unique was that its ruling figure, the aristocrat of the veldt, was a born peasant, with the hard, coarse, sound grain of a Low-German race, without traditions of refinement or chivalry, without arts and without literature, except for a Bible, which he was often unable to read. Whatever gentle blood, with its subtle instinct for refinement and a code of honour, flows in the veins of the South African Boer came mostly from the two or three hundred immigrants that Africa received from those Huguenot families whom the fanaticism of Louis XIV. had driven to seek new homes in Protestant States, and amongst whom there appear to have been

some families of distinction. But the Dutch Boer took care that the *pur sang* of his peasant stock should not be too much altered by any refinements or traditions of gentility which the French settlers may have brought with them. He suppressed their language and dispersed them over districts occupied by Dutch farmers, with the result that anything distinctive in their national sentiment and manners, except perhaps a superior degree of neatness and industry observable in Franschehock and the Drakenstein, disappeared completely in a couple of generations.

The great fact in the history of the Boer is that he has grown up in complete isolation from European culture. Except for the Bible, which he seems to have read very much as our Puritan ancestors did, as a warrant to go forth and spoil the heathen, and Willem Slayter's hymns, he had nothing that connected him with the traditions, the literature, or the art of Europe. It is true the Dutch young ladies at Capetown, as Captain Percival of his Majesty's Royal Irish regiment informs us, dressed after the English fashion, and were fairly accomplished in music and dancing. But the Boer of the veldt knew nothing of such frivolities. I have nowhere read that he possessed as much as a musical instrument, and it is unlikely that he paid much attention to the "gorrah's humming reed," or the rude guitar with which the Hottentot herdsman cheered his melancholy lot.

But he sang Willem Sluyter's hymns morn and even, and said long graces before meat ; a peculiar people, and, had it not been for the temptation of that poor native race around them, a good one.

His language alone would have doomed the Boer to intellectual isolation. It was not the language of Dutch books, or even the common speech of Hollanders ; it was the Taal, a rude peasant tongue, with a vocabulary, Olive Schreiner says, as limited as that of pigeon-English, and still further debased by accretions from the lingo of Kaffirs and Hottentots. Even to-day, the same authority declares, the true-bred Boer finds it just as difficult to pass an examination in literary Dutch as in English. Not that I think the Taal such a curiosity as that talented writer in her enthusiasm fancies it to be. The language of Ezekiel Biglow, or Tammas Haggart and his compeers in Thrums, or the Ligurian speech of an old peasant from Cogoletto would answer every point in Mrs. Schreiner-Cronwright's description of the Taal. But these vernaculars exist on the fringes of a cultured society and side by side with a literary language, which is equally current for the purposes of the press and the pulpit. But in Cape Colony, outside of Capetown, there was no cultured class at the time of the British occupation, and not more than four or five clergymen for the whole widespread Boer population. Except in a few thriving villages

in the corn districts near the Cape, there were no schools. The only schoolmaster obtainable by the Boers of the veldt was generally a wandering soldier discharged from the Capetown garrison, and his functions were even more varied than those of Sybrandt Mankadan, the historic dominie of Stellenbosch ; for in addition to keeping the Boer's accounts and teaching his children to read and cipher, he might be asked to take a hand at the plough or other farm work. The condition of the whole colony is fairly represented by the fact that at this period it had no newspaper, no printing press, no regular mails, and also not a single professional tramp or beggar of the white race except the privileged Lazarus, whom Bird describes as lying at a rich man's gate on the road to Wynberg.

This intellectual isolation of the Boer goes a long way to explain certain anomalies in his character. Nearly all the traditions which have been part of the education of Europe and America have passed him by, the civic spirit of progress, the ideals of science and philosophy, the enthusiasm of the saint and the scholar, the code of Bayard, the traditional, at least traditional, respect for truth—so candidly absent in the bulletins of Pretoria and the proclamations of Steyn, all that has been left out of the composition of the Boer as completely as the art of Monsieur Worth and other elegances of European life. The

educated Afrikander of Bloemfontein and Pretoria may belong to European civilisation, but the typical Boer, the Boer of the veldt, hardly does any more than the children of Karabe and Moselekatse. The store-clerk in Omaha who knows all about the etiquette of sport, and the shop-girl in Kansas who arranges her room after the boudoirs of Duchesses, as shown in the *Home Journal*, are in comparison saturated with the traditions of Europe.

All the same, it is in this Boer of the veldt that the peculiar virtues of the race seem to be concentrated, its hardihood, its faculty for building up life in the wilderness, and its faith, its intense convictions on the subject of race and destiny and land, *ons land*, which have only partially found a Burns or a Bjornstjerne in Olive Schreiner. In her pages the Great Karroo at least, with its wastes of red sand and fantastic kopjes, and the charm of its solitude and great horizons, have been made familiar to the European imagination.

The one place in this extensive country which had any resemblance to a town was the capital, Capetown. At the time of the British occupation it had a population of about five thousand white people and ten or eleven thousand slaves. It was pleasantly situated on the shore of Table Bay, with the magnificent mountain scenery of Table Mountain, Lion's Hill and Devil's Hill in the background, almost

encircling it on the land side. It was well laid out, the principal streets being wide and regularly built, with canals flowing through them, lined on each side with oak-trees. The houses were neat and substantial, in some cases elegant mansions with large gardens attached to them. The public buildings were handsome, and the citadel, Government House, barracks, grand parade, and batteries gave an air of state and military display to the town.

Society in Capetown, even before the advent of the British, seems to have had all the characteristics of what is specifically called society in every part of the world. The young ladies there spoke French and English, had a fair musical education, and dressed after the fashion of Paris and the Hague. The Dutch admiral Stavorinus, who visited the Cape in 1778, is rather severe on their vanities; "the first lesson they learn," he says, "is how to make themselves agreeable to the men, and especially to strangers . . . nothing is omitted that can render them elegant and attractive." Stavorinus was evidently a steady-going old Hollander, who did not appreciate the characteristic colonial smartness and vivacity of the Cape ladies. In general, indeed, though he had a high opinion of the country farmers, he thought little of the inhabitants of Capetown. "The chief trait in their character," he says, "is the love of money, . . . palpable and universal." He

thought the men lazy and inactive both in body and mind, indifferent to education or improvement, and distinguished by an "utter ignorance of whatever does not daily strike their outward senses."¹ Stavorinus was himself a Dutchman, and not likely to mistake, as an Englishman might, mere Dutch gravity for sloth. There was evidently something of the moral languor of a Dutch East Indian colony even at the Cape.

The account which Captain Percival, of the Royal Irish Regiment, gives of Capetown society in 1801, agrees in most points with that of Stavorinus, except that he is all admiration for the smartness of the ladies, and has evidently a good opinion of their character. But the men seemed to him heavy and almost morose in their want of social graces. "A Dutchman's hat," he remarks, "seems nailed to his head even in the company of ladies." The captain is troubled more than once about the Dutchman's use of his hat.

It is evident that the ordinary Capetown burghers had neither much taste for intellectual pursuits nor for smart society. They rather avoided social intercourse with the English, partly no doubt resenting the rigid English manner of regarding nothing as correct that was not English, and congregated by

¹ J. P. Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies* (translation), vol. iii. p. 436. See also Barrow, vol. ii. pp. 102 and 386.

themselves at the Concordia Club or elsewhere, playing cards and smoking interminable pipes, and no doubt making quiet, caustic criticisms on the British method of conducting things.

Between the higher class, however, of Dutch officials and professional men and the British a social fusion seems soon to have taken place, and Wilberforce Bird, Comptroller of Customs at the Cape, gives an amusing picture of the daily loungers at the African Club House in the Heeregragt about 1820. There British and Dutch civil servants, military gentlemen from the barracks, naval officers on the station, invalided Indian officials recruiting their health in the bracing air of the Cape, Dutch advocates and physicians, assembled during the morning to circulate gossip and take critical observation of the passers-by, especially ladies on their way to the milliner's shop next door. This was the aristocratic society at the Cape, and constituted an environment for the British Governor which might at times have considerable influence on his policy.

For business Capetown depended largely on the retail trade with British and foreign ships calling at the port and the custom of passengers who stayed on shore to refresh themselves after the long voyage. Everybody at the Cape called himself, a *koopman*, or merchant, whatever else he might be, the Cape Dutch, as Barrow and others remark, holding traffic in high

honour.¹ Almost every family even of the well-to-do took boarders ; great officials retailed the produce of their gardens by means of slaves ; ladies of society sent their female slaves to peddle feminine wares to the neighbouring villages and country houses ; and ships calling at the Cape were besieged by boats plied by slaves and filled with oranges, melons, and other fruits from the gardens of all classes of the inhabitants.

But few except the lowest whites would consent to work at a trade, and most handicrafts were carried on by slaves, who, besides doing the carpentering, shoe-making, &c., required by the family, were generally hired out by their master. Even a family of inferior condition usually possessed six or eight slaves. The expenses of a Dutch household in Capetown were consequently small, and though few of the inhabitants were very rich the greater number were in easy circumstances.

But between the civilisation of Capetown and that of the Boer of the veldt there was not only a gap, there was all the contrast which in Lydgate's time existed between the Chancery clerks in London, or the sharp people of the Cheap, and the yokel from the hop-fields of Kent. Capetown was then the Boer's only market, and the place from which the

¹ This belonged to the traditions of the Dutch East India Company's service, in which the title of *koopman* was official and highly honourable.

laws that governed him were promulgated. But he regarded it mainly as the seat of an alien aristocracy of officials, whether Dutch or English, *edele Heeren*, who oppressed and pillaged him with their taxes and duties. Its ways and manners were strange to him, and the aristocrat of the veldt—the haughty Boer, as travellers frequently call him—accustomed to lord it over a dependent train of Hottentots and slaves at home, when he visited Capetown became a helpless being in the hands of lawyers or designing agents, “Semans,” as he called them, who took advantage of his ignorance to plunder him. After disposing of his waggon load of butter and soap, 1,200 to 1,500 pounds, perhaps for £30 or £40, about half its market value, he inspanned again, and was no doubt glad to find himself once more across the Berg or the Breede River on his way home to the Roggeveld or Camdeboo, where he perhaps consoled himself by reading Willem Sluyter's *Fable of the Town and Country Mouse*, or a favourite stanza or two from the *Buiten Leven* in praise of rural solitude and tranquillity.

De wijze Vaders leefden immer
Meest buyten, niet in't Stadsch getimmer.
In hutten op hete ensaem veld
Was slechts haer wooning neer-gestelt.
Soo wierd van haer op't best, in tenten,
De Stad, op vaste fondamenten
Selfs door Gods meester-konst gebouwt,
Verwacht en door 't geloov' aenschouwt.

God selfs om-vleescht gaend' hier beneden,
Hield noyt soo véel van macht'ge Steden.

Ging Nazareth en Bethlehem

Gods Zoon niet voor Jerusalem ?

Moest niet deglans van sijne werken

In kleyne Stedekens uytsperken ?

Moest niet d'Olijfberg of Woestijn

Sijn keurigste vertrek-plaets zijn ?

The patriarchs old preferred to dwell

In fields, not in the city's cell ;

And pitched their tents where best they felt,

Afar upon the lonely veldt.

Their wanderings here should end at last

In Zion, whose foundations fast

Were laid by God's own master-hand,

Their hope, their prize, their promised land.

God's self, when in the flesh He came,

Sought not great towns, but loved the name

Of Nazareth and Bethlehem

Before that of Jerusalem ;

And little hamlets had the glory

Of all His wondrous works and story ;

Dearest to Him the solitudes

Of desert plains or Olive's woods.

These two stanzas may give the reader some idea of Willem Sluyter, the Boers' classic ; for, like other great sages, he is nearly always saying the same thing. The poetry of Sluyter is as good a help for understanding the life of the veldt Boer—what is spiritual or religious in it, I mean—as anything I have come across. His simple faith and quaint

pastoral ideas of life are expressed there in a way which he can feel and understand. To this day the simple old pastor of Eibergen, in Gelderland, obsolete in his own country, is for the Boer a Shakespeare and a Cowper combined.¹ But perhaps with the younger generation Mr. Reitz's collection of patriotic anti-British ballads has displaced him.

¹ My edition of *Sluyter* was picked up in a farmhouse near Poplar Grove (old Orange Free State) by Frederic Hamilton, war-correspondent with the Canadian contingent. It is in black-letter, and must date back to the early part of the eighteenth century. "All that was not the Bible seemed to be *Sluyter*," Hamilton remarked to me.

II

The Dutch East India Company—Its Growth and Decline—Its Rule at the Cape of Good Hope.

THE fortunes of Cape Colony were so intimately bound up with those of the Dutch East India Company and with the growth and decline of Holland as a Great Power, that a brief account of these things may be useful for the reader.

The Dutch East India Company had at one time been the greatest of the great chartered Companies which the chief maritime powers of Europe established in the East during the seventeenth century. Holland, Denmark, England, and France were all eager to seize a share of that lucrative Eastern trade which had been the possession of the Portuguese since the days of Albuquerque; and the chartered Company, with full powers of levying troops and making war or peace, was the special form which expansion took in that age. Then, as now, the real force behind commercial expansion, and indispensable for its support, was the military power; and the

Dutch, whose ships were the most numerous and best equipped and whose sailors were the most skilful of that time, soon won a commanding position in the East, especially in the Indian Archipelago, where the natives, dispersed in small communities amongst the different islands, were less able to make any resistance. Their most serious conflicts were with the Spaniards and Portuguese, the latter of whom they drove out of Ceylon, Malacca, the Moluccas, and the best of their Eastern settlements, thus securing exclusive possession of the coveted spice trade. Their ships patrolled the Straits of Sunda and Malacca in the trading season, and their factories and forts were planted in the most advantageous positions along the coasts and islands of the East from the Persian Gulf to the Yellow Sea.

It need hardly be said that there was nothing scrupulous in their methods in those days when, according to common saying, "no peace held good beyond the line." They tortured and massacred the small English settlement in Amboyna on mere suspicion, pretended suspicion, Crawfurd says,¹ of a plot against themselves, in 1623; and Governors like Vlaming and Valckenier conducted their executions in wholesale fashion, the latter massacring 10,000

¹ Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*. The author was British Resident at the Court of the Sultan of Java about 1812.

Chinese at once in Batavia. It was an age which did not spare life, and the scattered Empire of the Dutch resting on a number of isolated military posts with garrisons varying in number from 30 to 200 European soldiers, could only be secured by fostering strife and jealousy between the native princes (Stavorinus himself accepts it as a cardinal principle of their rule), and by the severest measures of repression.

It was not a genuine territorial empire, but a series of stations or small settlements on the coast. Each of these had its separate establishment, its fort and garrison, its residency and warehouse, and, if large enough, its European village, with surrounding Malay, Buginese or Chinese encampments, its regular staff of Governor, Second Governor, Commandant, all "Senior Merchants," Master of Port, Paymaster Fiscal, &c., "Merchants" or "Junior Merchants" and, if there was a considerable Dutch population, also such officials as a Pastor, a *Krankbezoeker*, or Visitor of the Sick, and perhaps an itinerant schoolmaster, all in the pay of the Company.

The service of the Company offered a tempting career in some respects to an adventurous young Dutchman who had influence with the Chambers at home; but in these early days it was a rough and dangerous one. What between fighting the Spaniards and Portuguese, and never-ceasing conflicts with the

natives, and the frightful ravages of scurvy and dysentery, in the outward bound ships particularly, it cost the Dutch many lives to establish that famous empire in the East Indies. It was no uncommon thing for a ship with a crew of 200 to arrive in the Texel or at the Cape with hardly enough hands to take in sail,¹ thirty or forty of them having died on the passage, and most of the rest being down with scurvy. Of the seamen and soldiers that sailed every year for the Indies, Stavorinus calculates that about a sixth died on the way. But it was no bad service for any roaring blade or reckless adventurer to try his fortunes in, and its rank and file were recruited from the various nations of Europe, refugees and deserters from Prussia, Hanover, and Sweden, and men kidnapped in the low ports.

The great *Recueil des Voyages* (Amsterdam, 1754) contains the story of their early navigations and warfare in the East, takings of settlements, brushes with Portuguese on the high seas, conflicts with natives, mutinies, &c., written by men who took part in them. The Dutch are a stout, fighting, persistent race, and in the course of half a century had cleared the Portuguese pretty well out of the Archipelago. A fair sample in a small way of their doings is the taking of Solor Island, in the Timor group, by Captain Apollonius Schot, of Middleburg, in 1613. A

¹ Stavorinus, vol. ii. p. 93.

couple of Dutch ships sail into the bay, dismount the poorly-served Portuguese battery at the entrance, draw up before the fort and small native village, plant a battery also on the land, and blaze away. After the village has been burned and a tower or two of the fort battered down, there is a capitulation, and the Portuguese garrison, some thirty or forty men, are transported to the nearest Portuguese settlement, and the Dutch enter into their labours, occupying their fort and taking up their commerce with the natives, that is, calling upon the latter to supply them exclusively with their commodities, in this case beeswax, ambergris, and sandal-wood, at a fixed price. But the ending was not always so merciful, and on both sides many men languished and died in prison.

It was to obtain a convenient half-way house and victualling station for this extensive commerce with the East that, in 1652, an expedition under Jan Van Riebeeck took possession of the Cape of Good Hope, and thus laid, without much suspecting it, the foundations of their greatest colony. But the Cape, which had no rich trade in silks or spices to give them, was a station only of second or third-rate importance in the Company's service, and administered on the same system as the settlements at Macassar or Samarang.

The most flourishing period of the Company was the middle part of the seventeenth century. In the Directors' Report of the year 1664, the Company is

said to possess about 140 vessels, well provisioned and mounted with guns, and to employ about 25,000 men. Its yearly expenditure in fitting out its expeditions to the Indies ("*ce que l'on envoie aux Indes en argent comptant, marchandises, vivres et autres choses nécessaires*") was from two and a half to three millions, and the merchandise it brought yearly from the Indies yielded "nine, ten or eleven millions of livres,¹ about a million sterling."

The seventeenth century was the great period of Dutch commerce and expansion generally. More than half the carrying trade of Europe was in their hands, particularly that of the Baltic. The herring fisheries in the northern seas alone employed over a hundred thousand Dutch seamen. Even the profits of the East Indian trade, great as they were for the first sixty or seventy years of its establishment, accounted for but a part of the wealth which flowed into the United Provinces, and of the merchandise which filled the immense warehouses of Amsterdam, then the special emporium for the East. But it was their dominion in the Indies which trained their best sailors and employed their best ships, the great East Indiamen of eight hundred or a thousand tons burden, and carrying from forty to fifty guns. As long as these latter continued to be factors of importance in naval warfare, Holland was a Sea Power of the first

¹ Directors' Report in *Recueil*, vol. i. p. cxxv.

rank. It was their Indian empire also that called forth their highest energies as colonists and navigators, and gave a kind of imperial grandeur to their history. Literature and art too blossomed on this opulent soil, and the commercial enterprise and energy of that age had no doubt something in common with the spirit which inspired the labours of Grotius and the art of Rembrandt. Most of the classic names of Dutch art and learning belong to the same era.

The foundations of this prosperity had been laid in habits of frugality and patient industry which were the scoff of an age whose study was but little on economics. It was no courtier of Versailles or Whitehall, but a sturdy English republican and poet, who wrote the famous satire on their thrifty ways and the laborious diligence of their poldering operations,

To make a bank was a great plot of state ;
Invent a shovel, and be a magistrate.

But the rulers of the East Indies could afford to disregard the jest of Marvel. The domestic simplicity of their manners was proverbial, and happily illustrated in the life of their greatest naval hero, De Ruijter, who was found by the Spanish admiral and grandee who visited him in a plain house in the outskirts of Amsterdam, reading his Bible, while his wife sat at her knitting. It was always the same

story—*Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini*—till the New Americanism arose to overpower with its superb material magnificence those primitive conceptions of greatness. In the presence of that great democracy with its Waldorfian luxuries, the proverbs of Solomon are growing obsolete as they never did in the high days of King and Kaiser, for the people had no share in them then ; almost as obsolete as Dante's tirades against the fine dress of the Florentine ladies: "There is nothing too good for my little woman," says a solid, quiet, powerful man, whom a Montana mine has suddenly made rich, and presents his wife with 40,000*l.* worth of diamonds at Tiffany's. And the little woman, who washed her own steps a year ago, knows how to wear them. Radical oratory, I observe, has lost its voice over it, and I hear nothing at all in these days about a "bloated aristocracy."

We are not idle on the other side, however. I see that the President of one of the great universities in the States, with the practical turn of his countrymen, is at present healthily engaged in proving by actual experiment, to be published in the Magazines, that he can live, he and his family, on thirteen cents a day, or it may be fifteen, which is little more than the price of a working man's cigar in Chicago or New York. Such a rebuke to luxury I have not read of since George Fox's leather suit, or Diogenes in his

tub ; the former, by the way, would be a great help to the President, if he means to hold out for more than a year.

The decline of the Dutch East India Company, along with that of Dutch commerce generally, commenced early in the eighteenth century. But long before that the rivalry of the English had begun to be felt. In 1651 the English Navigation Act, depriving the Dutch of the right to carry freight between England and her Colonies or between England and other European countries, was a heavy blow to the great carrying trade of Holland. The Dutch felt that they must fight for their commerce, and the Navigation Act was the substantial cause of a series of naval wars between the two Powers in which, after great victories on each side and some indecisive fights, the balance of power ultimately remained with the British. For notwithstanding the skill of the two greatest of Dutch admirals, the elder Tromp and De Ruijter, and the memorable success of the latter's sudden swoop into the Thames at a time when most of the English ships were out of commission, the Dutch navy during these wars was hard put to it to protect Dutch shipping, and more than once completely lost the command of the seas and its own coasts. The end of it all was the formal concession by Holland at the Peace of Westminster, and again at that of Utrecht (1713), of the much

contested "right of the flag" and England's supremacy on the seas. That meant, as Capt. Mahan has pointed out, the transference to British ships of most of the great carrying trade the Dutch possessed, the merchants of all countries naturally preferring a shipping the security of which was guaranteed by the power of its navy. Even the Dutch capitalists themselves became timid ; and though for long after they continued to be the money-lenders of Europe, did not care to risk investments in distant colonies, and an expansion of trade which their naval power might not be able to protect. The leadership in commercial and colonial enterprise thus passed with the supremacy of the seas into the hands of the British.

The fight had been a gallant one on both sides. When it began, and it had been sought rather than avoided by the Dutch, there had seemed to be no great disparity between the two Powers. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the population of Holland, according to Motley, was about the same as that of England, three and a half millions, and in wealth and the mere number of ships that could be used for purposes of war, the advantage lay with the Dutch.

But while the growth of England was only beginning, that of Holland was already at the height. With a small acreage, about a tenth of that of the

United Kingdom, with no natural riches or great manufactures, Holland could not keep her place amongst the Great Powers. By the close of the eighteenth century England had trebled her population, exclusive of that of Scotland and Ireland, while that of Holland, exhausted by wars too great for her resources, had declined. There had never, indeed, been any surplus population sufficient to develop or make a natural garrison for her great acquisitions over the ocean. At the Cape all the efforts of the Dutch East India Company could not procure, even at the time of the Huguenot influx into Holland, any great immigration from the mother country, and the population of that important colony was slowly recruited from discharged soldiers of the garrison, often of German or Swedish extraction, or roving adventurers who had no particular ties of sentiment or family with the country which governed them.

But the seeds of decline lay also in the character of the Company itself. It had been founded, and it continued to be conducted, for purely commercial ends. What the Dutch, with characteristic prudence, sought abroad was not territorial dominion, but posts of vantage and exclusive privileges for their commerce. They seized territory and built forts, but only for the purpose of securing control of the products of the district, which they forced the natives

to sell at a small price exclusively to the Company. The result was detrimental to the character of the Company's agents and officials. They did not conquer, administer, and civilise. They hardly felt, therefore, the responsibilities of Government, while they were exposed to all the temptations of absolute rulers in remote and isolated dependencies.

A constant source of corruption also existed in the method adopted by the Company for the payment of their officials. The salaries of these had been fixed on the frugal scale of the early days of the Republic, when a burgher-like simplicity of life, such as is recorded of De Ruijter, was not uncommon amongst them. In the time of Stavorinus even (1774), the vice-governor at Macassar, an important settlement, with a civil and military establishment of 800 men, could not make on an average more than 500 rix-dollars a year, about £100 sterling, from his lawful emoluments, but he might easily make four or five times that sum in a corrupt manner. As he happened to be a very honest man (Bernard van Pleuren), it was rather hard on him.¹ The Governor-General of the Dutch Indies himself at Batavia, the headquarters, received little more than a thousand pounds a year by way of fixed salary, but he usually made £20,000 in the exercise of his privileges.² The temptations of such a situation for men who had

¹ Stavorinus, vol. ii. p. 274.

² *Idem*, vol. ii. p. 131.

grown accustomed to the luxurious habits of the East were very great, and the Company's agents almost everywhere abused the privileges they possessed of supplementing their salaries by private trade and the collection of duties. A universal corruption, which deprived the Company of much of its revenue, prevailed throughout the Dutch settlements. Even men like the brave and hardy Speelman, the conqueror of the Celebes, sank in the end under the influence of the climate and the habits around them.¹ For there was all the luxury and indulgence of Oriental life in these Dutch settlements, and many also of its forms and usages, the servile obedience of the surrounding population, of Javanese *tommagongs* or native middlemen, of Chinese captains, and of a crowd of dependents and slaves, the dancing girl and the black seraglio, or something very like it.² The Residency at Samarang or that at Joana, with its dome, its gilded cornices and curious carvings, was a much more magnificent place than the corresponding edifice at the Cape. The junior merchant went abroad with a slave holding a sunshade over his head, and the Dutch lady, mostly with a strain of native blood in her, was as fond of her betel-box as any Buginese woman.

This Eastern luxury was not without its effect on

¹ Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, vol. ii. p. 291.

² Stavorinus, vol. ii. p. 156.

the ancient simplicity of the mother-country. Many a retiring official, no doubt, brought home with him the laxities of Vlaardingen or Samarang to infect the soberer life of Dutch cities, and startle even people who were not quite as precise as the Calvinists of Groningen. But generally speaking the luxury of the Dutch at home seems to have taken characteristically moderate and respectable forms; no Neronian or Trimalchian extravagances, but only an excessive love of ease and comfort, a furious rivalry in rare plants and costly gardens, and a love for genre pictures of a not too elevated school; in short, a general relaxing and a settling down into comfortable enjoyment of life as it was—such life as we see, for example, in the quiet opulence of the interiors of Gerard Douw and De Hoogh. The art of these masters reflects perhaps better than anything else the seductions to which the Dutch temperament lay most open.

To other nations, indeed, Dutch art seems a greater interpreter of the national history than Dutch letters probably because it is better known. One need only look at the portraits of the two Admiral Tromps, father and son, to see the change that half a century of wealth and conquest had made in the manners of the Dutch. Old Marten, the son of a sea-captain, with his broad weather-beaten visage, roughly lined and seamed, and apparently a little carbuncular,

looks like a man who has known the hardships of a seaman's life in those days, the fluxes and scurvies, the filth and the hardy profanity of the forecastle. But there is something great in the massive head and in the strenuous countenance, on which great sagacity and resolution are plainly written. Equally bold and circumspect as the occasion required, Marten was the crafty Odysseus of the Narrow Seas, and could bring 300 sail of Dutch merchantmen safely through the English Channel, though Blake and Penn were waiting for him in the Downs.

But Jaevens's portrait is admirable also for what it tells us of the manners of the man as shown by his dress. There was no regular uniform in the navies of those days, and Marten Tromp might have had himself painted in lace and shining armour like most of the Admirals and Generals-at-Sea of that period ; but he chose to appear in what was evidently his daily wear, a plain, serviceable-looking doublet, not too elegantly cut or adjusted, and with nothing more ornamental in its make than a cuff, which I think was then old-fashioned. There is no lace cravat, only a plain square-cut linen collar, on which the long hair, now growing thin and ungracefully relaxed with age, falls in careless unkempt ends. A small medallion hangs on his breast ; but except for that there is no decoration, neither chain, lace, embroidery, nor lappel about the person of this old sea-dog of

Holland. It is very different from a Reynolds' portrait of an English admiral, a peer in lace and ruffles, with a fleet in action on the distant background. Each artist was true enough, no doubt, to the character of his subject ; yet there was probably more in common between Marten Tromp and our English Boscawens and Hawkes than the elegant art of Reynolds and his school quite brings out.

Cornelis, the younger Tromp, is a fitter subject for Sir Joshua than his father. There is no doubt about him ; he is as much a magnifico as Lord Sandwich or Prince Rupert himself. Plump and sleek, with elegantly curled locks in his earlier portrait as Lieutenant Admiral of the Maze, in his age he is still more resplendent, a perfect dandy of the Restoration period, with a gorgeous hat and feather, superb cravat and immense peruke descending in heavy curls over his steel corselet. He was a gallant seaman too, though rasher and less capable than his father. His face has a bull-dog kind of courage in it, but is fleshy and puffed, and altogether wanting in the strenuousness of old Marten's.

Such changes, of course, are part of the general history of civilisation. No nation can retain with increasing wealth the ancient simplicity of its manners, and the real question is what capacities of political evolution lie in it, what new stratum of the national life it can bring forward to replace or recruit the class

whose energies have begun to flag from success and satiety. ¹ But apparently there was no reserve of strength in so small a nation as Holland to produce a second growth. The ruling mercantile class also had grown apprehensive, timorous about their commercial interests, and began to be fatally influenced by the idea of restricting and contracting their trade and settlements to some fancied point of security and easy management, instead of seeking a larger unity and a bolder development of their empire. In the case of the East India Company, which included, one way or another, nearly all the influential merchants of Holland, this policy had a damaging effect on many of their settlements. They conquered islands like Celebes, only to find that they lost most of their commercial value in their hands,¹ and the great colony at the Cape suffered particularly from this policy of restricting development. In the Moluccas and the Banda islands they destroyed every year great quantities of clove and nutmeg trees to secure a monopoly for what they could bring in their own ships. Their ideal was to have a strictly limited trade, with high dividends to the Company. But the result was that the consumption of these spices in Europe, which in any case perhaps was on the wane, decreased greatly as the price rose, pepper and ginger taking their place in a great measure ;

See Crawford, vol. ii. p. 443.

and every now and then the Company had to burn immense surplus quantities of spice at Amboyna and Middleburg.

Owing to this policy the famous Eastern trade was carried on, as far as oceanic commerce was concerned, by a comparatively small number of ships, about fourteen every year during the seventeenth century, and from twenty to thirty during the eighteenth. As there was no encouragement of private enterprise, most of the commerce of the East, especially the tea trade from China, fell into the hands of British and American private traders, and even the intercourse between Holland and her own Colonies, in spite of the heavy duties on foreign shipping, was largely carried on by the ships of those two nations.¹ From these causes the Dutch trade and capital employed in the East remained on too small a basis to meet the increasing expense of armaments and the losses in time of war. In the eighteenth century most of the settlements were appearing in the Company's books with balances on the wrong side. In 1779 the excess of expenditure over receipts in all of them taken together amounted to nearly £150,000 sterling.

But the sales of Eastern merchandise at home still yielded a large profit, and the value to the nation of a field which gave employment to 20,000 common men, and a high career as administrators, navigators,

¹ Crawford, *Indian Archipelago*, vol. iii. p. 289.

and merchants to some thousands more, is not, of course, computed in the Company's books. Those, however, who were best acquainted with the condition of the Company's affairs, Governor van Imhoff in 1743, and the great authority, Governor Mossel in 1753, had begun to sound a note of warning, though the latter struggles to make the figures look as well as possible: and honest Stavorinus, in 1777, wrote openly that the Company was likely to have a "disastrous termination at no very distant period if more effectual measures of redress are not resorted to." Stavorinus, indeed, has already begun to moralise on the "inscrutable designs of Providence," which enlargeth a nation and straiteneth it again. His gloomy prognostics are founded mainly on three points, the inability of Holland to supply the seamen and soldiers required to maintain these distant settlements, the prevalence of corruption amongst the Company's officials, and the expense of their wars in the acquisition of territory.¹

Wars, no doubt, especially European wars, were amongst the immediate causes of the Company's ruin. Its basis was not large enough to support the losses inflicted on its Colonies and commerce in 1781, when the Dutch, in the hope of overwhelming a dangerous rival, joined France, Spain, and the United States in their war with Britain. In these years the

¹ Vol. iii., chapters vi. and vii.

Company was sinking ever deeper into debt, all the more hopelessly that its difficulties were not fully made public, most of the leading merchants of the nation having an interest in the monopolies, and even the national pride of the Dutch being concerned to cover up the decaying condition of this relic of their former grandeur.

It was unfortunate for the great colony at the Cape that it belonged to the Company, and was tied to the system of administration and the policy established in the Dutch Indies.

In the Company's service it counted only as a station of second or third-rate standing. There were, as Crawford observes, few men of much note amongst the administrators of the Dutch Indies (one result of the purely mercantile aims of the Company), and these naturally aspired, not to an appointment at the Cape, but to one at Ceylon or Amboyna, which was in the high road of things, and led direct to a seat in the Council at Batavia and the chance of the governor-generalship. The Cape was only their "frontier fortress" and victualling station, and when the great conflict began, the best regiments, as a matter of course, were withdrawn from it to guard Batavia.

Yet the Cape had some good governors, like Simon van der Stel and Ryk Tulbagh, men who identified themselves with the colony and its interests rather

than with the Company, though even Governor Simon in his later years seems to have succumbed to the relaxing atmosphere of the colonial service, as his son Wilhelm Adriaan, who ruled after him, did in a still greater degree. In general, the colony at the Cape, under the aristocratic rule of these days, was a helpless participator in all the evils of the system. Both the States-General and the Directors, it is true, made at times earnest efforts to remedy disorders and the prevalent corruption, but there was something in the declining fortunes of Holland which made great or fundamental reforms impossible. There was the moral and material exhaustion following on conflicts too great for the strength of the nation, there was the consciousness of its military weakness and the decay of public spirit which that caused, and there was the insufficiency of Holland as a centre for the supply of immigrants and troops. All these things, together with the selfish policy of the Company, which sacrificed the trade of the colony to protect its own, made the rule of the Dutch at the Cape unsatisfactory, deficient especially in guidance and enterprise.

The celebrated Abbé Raynal, one of the philosophic spirits of the eighteenth century, has a story in his great *Histoire philosophique et économique des Deux Indes* of the last Portuguese Governor of Malacca, who had been forced after an obstinate

resistance to surrender that settlement to the Dutch. The Dutch general, it is said, asked him if they ever expected to get it back again. "Yes," replied the Portuguese, "when your sins have become greater than ours." I don't know that their sins ever became greater, or even as great, for the Dutch are naturally a prudent people, but evidently their time too had come in these last years of the eighteenth century, and both France and Britain, the Mede and the Persian, were already at their gates.

III

The First British Occupation—The State of the Colony in 1795—General Craig's Administration—The Boers of Graaf-Reinet.

IN 1793 Pitt had reluctantly made up his mind that there was nothing for it but war with the new French democracy, which was showing more resources than he had expected, and had begun to take up an aggressive attitude towards Holland. The worst of it was that in that country, as in many others, the defects of the old régime had created a strong revolutionary party, which was ready to believe in an era of universal equality and fraternity, and to ally itself with the French invaders whenever they appeared. A revolution in Holland therefore meant the practical control by the French of Dutch naval resources and Dutch power in the Indies. In these circumstances one of the first things England had to consider was the position of the Dutch naval station at the Cape of Good Hope, which, as Sir Francis Baring, one of the Directors of the English

East India Company, wrote at this time to Secretary Dundas, "commanded the passage to India as effectually as Gibraltar doth the Mediterranean." The States-General and the Directors of the Dutch East India Company, who were of the Orange and Anti-Revolutionary party, were well aware of their weakness, and consented, after some hesitation, to receive a British garrison at the Cape to secure it against a French attack, partly as a return for the services, which they gratefully acknowledged, of the British navy in guarding and convoying their commerce in the East.¹ A reverse, however, which the French suffered in the Netherlands at this time, seems to have calmed the apprehensions of the British Government, and nothing was done till an event occurred which altered the whole situation. The French General Pichegru, taking sudden advantage of a severe frost, called his soldiers from their winter quarters, and crossing the Meuse and the Scheldt took possession of Holland, overthrew the government of the Stadtholder, and set up a new "Batavian Republic" under French auspices, and really under French control.

It was as a counter-weight to this blow and a necessary measure of self-defence that Britain fitted out the expedition, ultimately amounting to between four and five thousand troops, which in 1795 took

¹ See *Records of Cape Colony*, 1793-1796, pp. 4-18.

possession of the Cape, after a very slight resistance on the part of the garrison and the inhabitants.

The British Government had certainly little idea of the administrative problems it was entailing on itself and its successors. The territorial dimensions of the Cape Colony, it is true, were already imposing, the trekking habits of the Dutch farmer having constantly extended its area till it now covered over a hundred thousand square miles. But the Dutch population in this extensive territory was not really large, consisting, according to the census returns of 1795, of about 15,000. There was, besides, a population of slaves numbering about 17,000, and a large number of Hottentots.

But economically as well as politically this great territory was in a state of confusion and disorganisation. The Dutch East India Company, under whose rule it was, had become bankrupt, and had been obliged the year before to declare itself unable to meet the interest on its loans. Its paper money, which as legal tender had become the only circulation in the colony, had depreciated over fifty per cent., and was besides, owing to the negligence of the Company's methods, extensively corrupted by fraudulent issues. The farmers were impoverished by monopolies and restrictions of trade, which existed for the benefit of the Company and its officials; the rents of these in the remoter districts were years in arrear, and the

regular collection of taxes had become impossible. Fiscal exactions had driven away the trade with foreign shipping; and internal trade, owing to the depreciation of the paper money, was mostly carried on by barter. Corruption, as might be expected, went hand in hand with mismanagement. Commodore Blankett, of the Royal Navy, in his report to the Admiralty, states that "the duties on import to Capetown on some articles come near a fourth of the whole value, and there is a charge of five per cent. on its re-export, without any drawback whatever being allowed. This is a great discouragement (to trade) as well as the mode of levy, which is done at the gate, liable to the connivance or oppression of the tax-gatherer who collects it, on the spot or after sale, in proportion as he chooses to favour the parties. In some such spirit of levy are all their taxes gathered, so that an officer of revenue makes his place worth holding without considering the salary more than an appendage to his office." (*Records of Cape Colony*, Jan. 10, 1796.)

The burghers themselves, the merchants of Capetown as well as the farmers of the interior, felt that the Company's mismanagement had brought the colony to the verge of ruin. Amongst the different reports the British Government was careful to obtain before commencing the work of reform and restoration, there is one from a Mr. Kersteins, a Dutch merchant

of Capetown, from which the reader may form an idea of the disorganisation which reigned in the affairs of Cape Colony. The report is evidently, as Admiral Elphinstone, who forwards it, says, that of an independent burgher, and may illustrate the feeling of those colonists who, while they had no confidence in the principles of the revolutionary party, despaired of the rule of the Orange officials at Capetown, and were not unwilling to welcome a change of flag, if it brought good government with it.

This colony has for several years been on the decline, and rapidly approaching its annihilation. The intolerable shackles laid on trade, the monopoly, the paper currency, the stamp taxes of all description, and above all the Jacobin mania, are the chief causes ; and I venture to say that nothing less than a revolution could have saved it. . . . The population of the colony does not exceed 21,000 inhabitants, the land is barren, and the enemies with which the people are surrounded are numerous. Government has lost its respect, and such was the oppression of the inhabitants that every prospect of reconciliation had vanished. It is now two months since Government sent a deputation to Graaff-Reinet—and that the Commissioners were obliged precipitately to leave the district, under the most imminent danger of losing their lives. Want of authority on the part of our Government is the chief reason that the Cape was so easily reduced. Everybody would command here, and nobody would obey. . . . The inhabitants are for the greater part impoverished ; this poverty has disposed them for disaffection and revolt, as appears again by the example of Graaff-Reinet.

Mr. Kersteins then gives an account of the fiscal policy of the Dutch Company, from which one may infer two things at least : that the Company were in

great straits for money, and considered their own needs more than those of the colonist ; and that the weakness of their authority made them rather afraid than otherwise to encourage and develop the resources of the cattle farmers.

The Company, so far from encouraging the breed of cattle, seems to have been resolutely bent upon the extermination of them, and by every means to have sought to keep the inhabitants low. The mediocrity of our breed of horses is likewise to be attributed to the Company ; they have in no instance allowed the captains of our Indiamen to import stallions from Holland for the improvement of our horses. But monopolies are the grievance to which we must look for the principal cause of the misery of the inhabitants. The Company, in order to get its own meat cheaper, has given to a Company, here called the Slaughter Company, the exclusive grant of selling meat to foreign ships. Now, admitting the common price to stand thus :

A pound of meat.....	2 pence.
A sheep.....	2 rix dollars.
A bullock	8 „

Foreigners are obliged to pay the Slaughter Company :

For a pound of meat.....	4 pence.
A sheep	4½ rix dollars.
A bullock	22 „

From that circumstance foreigners have for some time left off frequenting this colony, the houses have fallen in price, one half of them are without tenants, and that class of the inhabitants who were used to subsist on a temporary small traffic with them are reduced to mendicity.

. . . . By far the greater part of the farmers and of the inhabitants of the town are bankrupts, the rest have their property under sequester, and every individual looks forward to impending ruin.

The kind of maladministration into which the Company was driven by its weakness and want of money is excellently illustrated by the method Mr. Kersteins states it adopted to secure payment of its taxes. The Slaughter Company was granted its monopoly on condition of deducting whatever was due by the farmers to the Government from its payments to the farmers :

The butchers send their servants into the interior parts of the country for buying cattle ; these pay the farmers with bills on their masters ; the farmer when he comes to town to receive his money obtains only part of it, as the butcher, in correspondence with the Company, deducts from the sum what he (the farmer) owes the latter. Thus it is no unusual thing for a farmer to make a two months' journey to town, in hopes to purchase necessities for his wife and small family, to see his expectations baffled and himself obliged to return the same way home, both without money and necessities.

Mr. Kersteins then described the condition of the wheat and the wine trade under similar monopolies, after which he proceeds to another great grievance—the depreciation of the paper money and its unnegotiable character under the security of a bankrupt Company :

During the last war, the Company being in want of money, they borrowed from the inhabitants the specie they had, upon promise to restore it to them by the first ships from Europe ; but no specie was sent, and paper was left to circulate. After some time, however, some silver specie made its appearance ; but it was broached on the inhabitants with an advance of 20 per cent., which directly occasioned a loss on the property of

every inhabitant of 20 per cent. ; meantime the foreign nations which were used to frequent our ports, and to sell us their commodities, finding that there was no money in the colony, withdrew, forgot their way hither, and the paper-money fell an additional 50 per cent.

Mr. Kersteins concludes by a prophecy, which now that more than a hundred years have passed away, we ought to be in some position to judge ; but in judging we must clearly distinguish between the history of Cape Colony in general, and the history of the Boer of the Graaff-Reinet frontier, the Boer of the trek :

Laws, founded and framed on justice, and promulgated as soon as possible, are what the people stand in need of. From the knowledge I have of the inhabitants, I will venture to prognosticate that if they can compass that essential point, they will look up to the English as their liberators, and strenuously adhere to their duty and obedience, &c. (*Records*, 1793-1796, p. 167.)

The Cape Colony under Dutch rule was evidently a flagrant example of the *ancien régime*, under which the people were governed mainly in the interests of their governors. As a natural consequence, the new doctrines of the French Revolutionists which declared war on aristocracies and promised equal rights to all, found a ready welcome amongst a people dissatisfied with the corruption and tyranny of the Orange bureaucracy that governed them. When the British fleet anchored in Simon's Bay, the great districts

of Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet were already in revolt, had hoisted the French tricolour, and set up a government of their own, which they called, in imitation of the French Revolutionists, a National Convention. And they could do this with perfect impunity, for the Dutch Government at the Cape had become so weak that it could no longer either assert its authority within the colony or defend it from attacks from without. Such was the disorganisation with which the first British Governors, after the occupation in 1795, had to deal.

The first representative of British authority in Cape Colony was General Craig, the commander of the forces which had occupied the colony and were now stationed there as a garrison. His experience had been only that of a soldier, and the economic and financial problems which surrounded him in his new position as the Governor of a colony were often perplexing to him. He was, however, an able, prudent, and highly honourable man, just the kind of person required as interim Governor till the British Government had time to make itself acquainted with the situation and needs of the colony. His position being only a temporary one, his powers were restricted with regard to questions of commercial policy and legislation which the Home Government had not yet had time to consider. But he used his discretionary powers freely according to the tenor

of the instructions he had received to relieve the inhabitants from the more oppressive fiscal exactions and restrictions on trade ; and he met the temporary inconveniences caused by the change of government by a wise and indulgent use of permits.

For his chief work, that of restoring orderly government in the colony and reducing the revolted districts to obedience, he was well fitted both by his qualities as a soldier and a character which was alike modest, firm and conscientious. In Capetown and the colony generally, General Craig encountered no great opposition to his authority. This was partly because the colonists were too widely scattered to have any effective means of organisation ; but partly also it was because the vast majority of the Boers were colonists of the third and fourth generation and too illiterate to feel any strong ties of sentiment with a mother country which they had known chiefly through the unpopular government of the Dutch East India Company. With the exception of a small "Jacobin party," as the general called it, which had caught the flame of the French Revolution, the inhabitants were not so unfriendly to British rule as might have been expected. There was no difficulty at least in the administration of affairs. Both in Capetown and in the country districts, the general found the Dutch magistrates ready to co-operate with him ; and the correspondence between

them, which appears in the *Records*, shows a wonderful degree of harmony in their relations, and even something like mutual confidence.

One district only formed an exception, and seemed for a time to threaten serious trouble. This was the frontier district of Graaff-Reinet, which, before the arrival of the British forces, had revolted against the Company's rule and set up a government by "the Voice of the People," on the French model. The Cape Colony was at that time divided into four districts, each with its own body of magistrates and councillors; that of Capetown, a comparatively small district, and three other very large districts, Stellenbosch to the north and west, Swellendam to the east, and, still further east, and also stretching away northwards in the vicinity of what is now Colesberg, the district of Graaff-Reinet. It was this last district, and chiefly the distant frontier part of it, which made some show of holding out against the authority of the British general.

Graaff-Reinet, and particularly the men of Brintjes Hoogte and the Zuurveld on the Kaffir frontier, had always been a source of trouble to the Dutch Governors. There, on the lands lying along the Little and Great Fish Rivers, which formed a natural, though ill-kept and partly disputed boundary between the colony and the territory of the Kosa-Kaffir tribes, dwelt a race of rough frontier farmers

possessing large grazing farms, on which, with the aid of slaves and Hottentot servants, they reared great herds of cattle and sheep. The names of these men of Graaff-Reinet appear so frequently in the letters, reports, and judicial investigations of the period, that you get quite familiar with them, and can even here and there discern individual characteristics. Amongst those names the most frequent are those of Prinsloos, Burgers, Krugers, Jouberts, Erasmuses, Bothas, Smits,—all names, the reader will note, borne by the men who have been leading the Boers in their present conflict with the British.

The district of Graaff-Reinet was then the great stock-breeding district of Cape Colony. Much of it was Karroo soil, but towards the eastern frontier it was a pleasant country, with plenty of grass and water. Sparrman found the inhabitants in easy circumstances and rather envied by some of the corn-Boers as leading a kind of Arcadian life. The census of 1795 shows that the inhabitants possessed a much larger proportion of sheep and bullocks than the other districts, though perhaps not more than a fifth or sixth of what they really owned in this way ever appeared in the Returns. They alone could supply the quantities of cattle and sheep necessary for the support of Cape-town, with its citizens, garrison, and shipping. But the frontiersman in South Africa was just what he is

in every country which borders on a wild, uncivilised population—a rough, self-reliant person, often taking the law into his own hands and not easily brought under the ordinary restraints of government. From his earliest days he was habituated to warfare and bloodshed. As an infant he had perhaps had to flee with his mother over the veldt from a plundering band of Bushmen, and even as a boy he learned to hunt the same unhappy race in the mountains. There were few frontier families who could not count relatives fallen in this savage warfare, and had not suffered from their stock being driven off by the natives. Of course these injuries were repaid with interest. Usually the plundered farmer called upon his neighbours to assemble and help him to retake the spoil; and an expedition would go forth over the Nieuwveldt Mountains or the Fish River, and there would be shooting of Bushmen or Kaffirs, as the case might be, and raiding of kraals, and the farmers would return home as affluent in cattle, you may be sure, as they ever were, and perhaps a few serviceable slaves, women and children, would be added to the Boer household. Out of this practice the commando system arose, which for two hundred years has made every up-country Boer a trained warrior after his fashion.

The faults were not all on one side. Between the colonists and the Bushmen, who were irreclaimable savages living on wild game and plunder, it was for

long a war of extermination, no quarter given or expected on either side ; but with the Kaffirs, who were a high class of savages, the relations of the colonists were varying. They had some of them as farm servants, they had treaties and agreements with various powerful tribes living under their chiefs, they were sometimes at war and sometimes at peace with them. But, whether at war or at peace, there is no doubt the frontier colonist was a very aggressive neighbour. His wealth consisted in cattle and sheep, and his supply of money was got mainly from the amount of stock he could afford to sell to the Cape-town agents. No efforts of the Government could prevent many of the frontier colonists from entering the territory of the natives and pursuing an illicit trade in the purchase of cattle, a trade in which, says one Dutch magistrate, who evidently had great faith in the simplicity of the native, "the innocent Kaffir is always the loser." At any rate, from the earliest days the trade had been forbidden by the Dutch Governors because it invariably led to quarrels and bloodshed. Sometimes the colonist could persuade the native to sell his cattle for trifles, beads or buttons ; sometimes he enforced his bargains with his gun. It is evident also that the frontier farmers of the early days found advantages in a retaliatory raid. Some who had been plundered of their cattle came back as well off as ever, and some who had lost nothing gained by the

division of the captured booty. The very first Kaffir war the Graaff-Reinet farmers had seems to have arisen out of this illicit trade. Marthinus Prinsloo, it is said, while engaged in it, shot one of the followers of the Kaffir chief Rarabe. The Kaffirs revenged themselves by a raid in which they drove off the farmers' herds. Commandos were assembled under Joshua Joubert and Adriaan van Jaarsveld for reprisals. Large numbers of Kaffir cattle were taken. Adriaan alone distributed over 5,000 amongst his ninety-two followers. These expeditions were sanguinary also, women and children were sometimes shot by the burghers as well as men, and they were often captured and distributed amongst the farmers.

Another cause of warfare between the frontier Boer and the Kaffir lay in the impulse for expansion which no government, Dutch or English, could quite repress in the former. The frontier farmer was not an agriculturist, but a grazier. Possessing large flocks and herds, and inhabiting a soil somewhat scanty in grass, he required an immense extent of territory for his uses. His usual practice was when seeking, for one reason or another, a change of settlement, to wander into a new district and take up land to the extent of six thousand acres or more, or three miles on every side of the spot where he built his homestead. Having done so, he notified the Government, and as a matter of course was granted a right to the land as loan-land,

on condition that he paid a yearly rent of 25 rix-dollars (about £5) to the Government. The grant was supposed to be from year to year, but about that condition the frontier farmer never troubled himself. A title was of small value in his eyes, and he was ready to change his ground on the least prospect of advantage. When his sons were old enough they could move further on and take up new lands for themselves. As their families were often large, and the size of their farms enormous, we can imagine what the rate of their expansion would be. With such a way of life, the land hunger of the Boer was unappeasable, as it still is; and one of the chief difficulties of the Cape Government in those days was to control this expansion, and to impress on the trekking Boer the necessity of some consideration for the native races which he dispossessed. All the more so that the Kaffir tribes with whom he came into contact on the eastern frontier were warlike and well organised under their chiefs, and he might easily involve the Government in a struggle which in these days was beyond its resources.

It was not altogether a matter of sentiment that induced the Boers of Graaff-Reinet to hold out against the authority of the British Governor. In their eyes indeed the Orange bureaucracy at Capetown was almost as alien and unsympathetic a race as any British Government could be. The ideas that inspired

them were rather of a practical kind. As an independent community they calculated on keeping all the advantages of Capetown as a market and port of supplies, while they did away with all the restraints and obligations which the Capetown authorities imposed upon them in the interests of civilisation and the general welfare. Their pretensions are stated by Mr. Kersteins in the Report from which I have already quoted as follows :—" They refuse paying taxes ; they claim judiciary power with regard to the Hottentots in their service (' wallop your nigger as much as you like ') ; they proscribe the Moravians sent amongst them for the purpose of instructing the Hottentots in the Christian religion ; they claim the right of making prisoners of war their slaves and property." (*Records* 1793-96, p. 172.)

Such was the ideal of a State which the frontier Boer in his rude simplicity had conceived ; and it seems to be doubtful if it has materially changed amongst his descendants. It was a return of the natural man to the fierce pagan civilisation of the early world.

The Graaff-Reinet insurgents were aware that they had now a stronger Government to deal with at Capetown. But they lived far away on the frontier, where it would not be easy for the Government to reach them, and they thought they might make their own terms at little more cost than a formal profession of submission. They were rough and illiterate men,

arrogant in their ignorance of the strength at the disposal of the new British Governor, and very much over-estimating their own. But, for all that, it would be a mistake to think of them as a stupid people. They knew nothing, it is true, of the moral traditions and conventions on which European civilisation has slowly built itself up. The story of Ruth or Joseph, the chronicles of the wars of Israel, were far more intelligible to them than any page in the history of modern Europe could be. But in matters which lay within their ken, the Boers of Graaff-Reinet were a shrewd people. Self-reliance and hard matter-of-fact calculation of their circumstances were necessities of their existence. Indeed, few nations have been more sternly trained in two arts which the world has always held in honour—the arts of war and diplomacy ; they were always at both, either fighting natives or diplomatising with them, or with the authorities at Capetown. In the art of intriguing no gold-spectacled diplomatist in Europe had more practice than the Boers of the frontier ; and with all their illiteracy, and Landdrost Maynier declares even some of the commandants could not write or read with ease, Talleyrand himself could not have chosen his phrases more carefully with a view to future events, or mixed up points more adroitly than is done in their correspondence with the Government. In their first letter to General Craig (Oct. 25, 1795) they show that they know perfectly how to

cover audacious proposals under humble professions, how to probe the amount of resistance to be expected, and to leave themselves room either for an advance or a retreat. That letter, read in the light of the events which followed it, is so characteristic a specimen of Boer diplomacy that I give it here in a condensed form, adding some comments and elucidative notes in brackets :

HONOURABLE SIR,—

The undersigned, fearing that the inhabitants of this district may perhaps be represented in a very bad light to your Excellency by the one or other revengeful servant of the Company, have thought proper to state their grievances to your Excellency. . . . That the inhabitants would rather never have meddled with any disturbance [*somewhat euphemistic phrase for rebellion and expulsion of the Company's magistrates*] if the taxes were not become intolerable, and if we had been able to suffer our country, which we love as ourselves [*touch of poetry there, which may soften the heart of this new Governor*], to be reduced to a state of poverty, and to become the prey of the barbarous heathens. For twenty-six years we burghers have had to defend with our goods and our blood this district, which the Capetown and the navigation cannot dispense with [*needed to supply meat for town and shipping, they mean*]. That notwithstanding these services, the burghers have been from time to time more oppressed with taxes, while their principal products have been farmed out [*i.e., granted to individuals as monopolies*], and thereby kept at low prices, while the burghers have even been interdicted from selling their products to or purchasing anything from foreigners, and have received only paper money, which they cannot use to buy necessities from Europe or elsewhere [*ships calling at Capetown will not take such money*], a device for the Company to get all the specie

into its treasury "in a subtle and deceitful manner." For these reasons we have dismissed the Honourable Company, with all its unlawful servants, and have resolved not to obey its law or pay it taxes or duties, as we judge it not legal to pay any taxes for lands and places which we have always been obliged to defend at our own expenses. [*How does that doctrine about taxation and duties strike you, new British Governor? Nothing for nothing. If we need your markets, your lead and gunpowder, you need our cattle. And then the long-headed Boer puts forward some carefully chosen words of submission to authority.*] But we have never thought that the said district [*of Graaff-Reinet*] could be without any protector [*note the word*]. The burghers have never therefore opposed themselves against their High Mightinesses the States-General, nor against the Honourable Commissary Sluysken [*the last Dutch Governor*], nor against any who are not guilty of the destruction of the country; and if we are defamed to the contrary, we declare, as the voice of the people [*new French watchword come into fashion at Graaff-Reinet*], that it is not true, but false. [*This is rather a refined distinction, and not altogether according to the facts. It was Commissary Sluysken's magistrates and special commissioners whom they had ignominiously expelled; his taxes they had refused to pay. But the burghers want to use their allegiance to Holland as a possible pretext against submission. Then follows a statement of their doings with the local Government:*]

It has been judged expedient by the general vote of the people to choose representatives of the burghers to sit with the War Officer and Heemraden [*assessors or local councillors, burghers like themselves, but appointed by the Cape Government*]. Further, it has been judged expedient to appoint the burgher Carel David Gerotz, in expectation of (your) approbation or until further orders, as provisional landdrost, and T. V. Oertel as provisional secretary, the discontent of the burghers being thereby changed into good order; all which is now left to your Excellency's approbation. The undersigned request therefore very pressingly your Excellency will be pleased to appoint for our

district, as soon as possible, proper magistrates, and to provide the said district with the necessary gunpowder and lead for the preservation of the same. [*That last is important, to get a good supply of powder and lead from this English Governor; for that they must make some more or less formal and distinct recognition of his authority. About the next point in their letter there is evidently a little delicacy. They are a pious people of the Dutch Reformed Church, and they require a parson. Their last one, Mr. Manger, had been with them since 1792, but decided to leave them when they expelled their magistrates and set up for themselves. Perhaps it should be stated that the parson in Cape Colony was almost a State official, with a high official status, and paid by the Government. The burghers state their case thus:] The undersigned request your Excellency will also be pleased to provide our church, which is being constructed and already half finished at the expense of the poor inhabitants, with a parson; and as we know, yet choose to forbear speaking of, the reasons why our parson, in a subtle manner, is gone from us [*very suspicious people, the Graaff-Reineters, always apt to see subtlety in others*], notwithstanding we had assured him of his safety, we hope that he will repent of it and return again to his forsaken community. [*An awkward business this: return of repentant prodigal father. The letter concludes with a cautiously worded profession of submission, or something which might be taken for such:]**

We are still destitute of your Excellency's respected orders, which we expect in order to know how to behave ourselves in our present critical situation, whilst we have the honour most humbly to assure your Excellency that according to our oath and duty we will not fail—[*what?*]—to contribute to the preservation and welfare of this country. We have been commanded by the general vote of the people to represent all the aforesaid to your Excellency, and expect a favourable answer, and after having recommended your Excellency to the protection of the Supreme Being, we have the honour to be, &c. [*The signatures include those of C. D. Gerotz, the provisional landdrost, Adriaan van Jaarsveld, J. Joubert and others.]*

That was the first communication which passed between the ancestors of the Transvaal Boer, the Krugers, Jouberts and Prinsloos of that time, and the representative of the British Government; it was the beginning of a conflict which has lasted a hundred years, and in which I find the lineaments of the actors and the fundamental nature of the dispute have remained much the same. What was an average honourable English gentleman like General Craig (for even Mr. Theal admits he was a just and honourable man) to make of that letter with its phrases of submission, "we have appointed a landdrost in expectation of your approbation or till further orders"—"all left to your Excellency's approbation"? Would you not think that it meant the recognition of British authority? Nothing of the kind! Throughout their long letter they carefully avoid any formal expression of allegiance. Their idea is a kind of undefined overlordship or suzerainty under which the British Governor may confirm their appointments of magistrates, and perhaps himself appoint them, though they hope he will confine himself to the former, but under which they will be allowed to do much as they like in their district, especially as regards the treatment of natives and the extension of settlements to the east of the Fish River; on such terms they will recognise him as as their—Protector! that is their cautiously chosen word, title invented for the

situation : if his Excellency will be contented with that, and send them a good supply of powder and lead then he can construe this letter as he likes, and report that the Boers of Graaff-Reinet have submitted to his authority.

But General Craig failed to grasp the diplomatic character of the letter ; and probably setting down its ambiguities to the rustic simplicity of the farmers, received it as an acceptance of British authority. He replied in a very friendly strain, confirming their provisional appointment of a landdrost until Mr. Bresler, formerly an officer in the Dutch garrison, whom he had chosen for the post, should arrive. He tells them he has done away with the monopolies and restrictions of which they complain, and has made the coasting trade free, so that they can convey their produce to the capital "at a twentieth part of the expense and a tenth part of the time that has hitherto been required." He exhorts them to continue in the "sentiments of moderation and patriotism which so evidently appear to have dictated your letter"—"in the principles of religion and virtue ; due submission to the laws of that society in which Providence has placed us," &c., &c. For there is piety on both sides, each with its peculiar modifications.

It was a great surprise, then, to the general when he heard what occurred on the arrival of Mr. Bresler, the landdrost whom he had appointed. That same

day (22nd Feb., 1796) a meeting of the burghers was held at Graaff-Reinet village, during which amongst others the following persons were particularly active, Pieter Kruger, Jacobus Kruger, Jan Kruger, Schalk Burger, Adriaan van Jaarsveld, Jacobus Joubert, Marthinus Prinsloo. When Mr. Bresler rang the bell and had the British flag hoisted in due form at the drostdy, Joubert and Jan Kruger hauled it down, and informed Mr. Bresler that they would not recognise his authority. There was nothing for Mr. Bresler to do but return. He had been successful in getting the parson of Graaff-Reinet, Mr. Manger, to accompany him, and the burghers made proposals to the latter to remain. But the parson declined them, and went off with the landdrost. From the reports I find that their proceedings had at times been tumultuous, and that Mr. Bresler thought himself in danger. They "passed the whole day and night (19th September) in the utmost licentiousness and riot," writes the latter. (*Records*, 1796-99, p. 392.)

On hearing of these events, General Craig despatched a considerable force to establish the authority of the Government. But the news of its coming was enough, and before it could reach distant Graaff-Reinet, the majority of the burghers, seeing they had a strong and resolute Government to deal with, resolved to submit. The general at once recalled

the military ; and in return received a letter of the frankest submission, this time from the Graaff-Reineters, who declare themselves to be " faithful subjects " of his Majesty's Government. This letter was signed by provisional landdrost Gerotz and others in the name of the whole district. But it really represented the sentiments only of the moderate party there. The men of Brintjes Hoogte and the Zuurveld, the Prinsloos, Krugers, Besters, and others, had a meeting of their own, and sent in a separate letter of submission, which is cooler in the tone of its loyalty and shows a real or (as Mr. Bresler thinks) pretended anxiety about indemnities for the past and guarantees for the future, which is not a too hopeful augury. It is not unlikely that Woyer, the French emissary, who was busy amongst them in these insurrectionary movements, had been filling their heads with stories of press-gangs for the British navy, the aristocratic rigour of British law and discipline, and other things of that nature, to which their suspicious minds were but too ready to listen. There is something curious in the semi-legal, laboriously studied character of the language by which they seek to guard themselves against the fancied resentment of the Government, or, particularly, of the Cape Dutch officials. The main purport of the letter, however, is contained in its concluding part, in which the burghers ask leave to make a retaliatory raid against the Kaffirs, and *to*

occupy new lands beyond the Fish River, the boundary between the Colony and the Kaffir tribes :—

We request your Excellency will be pleased . . . to enable us to go and fetch back such cattle belonging to the aforesaid poor inhabitants as is still in the Kaffir country, in order to restore the same to the lawful owners.

And we further beg leave most humbly to request your Excellency will be pleased to allow us to occupy another tract of land, situated on the other side of the Great Fish River unto the Koonab (or, if it could be, unto the Kat River), in order that not only those who dwell too near each other may thereby be enabled to enlarge their business of breeding cattle, but also those who have not yet got any place, and who are still obliged to dwell with others, may likewise thereby be enabled to obtain one, and thus to forward their business.

There were other requests also for a landdrost in sympathy with their views, and not Mr. Bresler, and for the appointment of Heemraden from a list chosen by themselves—requests reasonable enough in ordinary times and settled districts, but hardly expedient to grant in the present condition of Graaff-Reinet.

Their letter was handed by General Craig to Mr. Bresler, whose comments on it are given in a long letter to the general. (*Records*, 1793-6, p. 497.) The sum of his criticism is this, that the magistrates who conducted the retaliatory expedition against the Kaffirs in 1793 could get no accurate account at the time from the burghers of their losses, only a general statement that the number of cattle taken

from them collectively was 65,357; while the census returns given in by the same burghers for that year gave the number of cattle they possessed as 8,004. Mr. Bresler considers their compensation was fairly adequate, that there is plenty of unoccupied land in the Zuurveld, and that their desire for the Kat River territory simply means a desire to get far enough from the magistrate's supervision, to raid the Kaffirs and carry on an illicit trade.

In his reply General Craig assured the burghers of complete indemnity for the past, suspended the collection of arrears of rent (eventually they were acquitted of them), but emphatically forbade any thoughts of a raid on the Kaffirs or of occupying the territory on the other side of the Great Fish River. "With what face," he writes, "can you ask of me to allow you to occupy lands which belong to other people? what right can I have to give you the property of others? and what blessing or protection could I expect from God were I to cause or even to encourage such a gross and glaring act of injustice? Should I not, in every view of morality and religion, be responsible for every life that would be lost in such a contest, &c., &c.?" Since the boundary line between the colony and the Kaffirs had been fixed in 1780 at the Great Fish River, General Craig was no doubt right in refusing the farmers' request to be allowed to occupy the lands at

the Koonab and Kat Rivers, a rich and beautiful tract, afterwards the subject of much dispute; it would have brought him into collision with the great Kaffir tribe under Gaika, whose authority extended over this region. But the men of Brintjes Hoogte would hardly appreciate either his delicacy or his policy. The district itself was at this time sparsely inhabited, and Gaika himself had no very ancient rights in it. However, the matter ended here for the time, especially as all hopes of a successful insurrection disappeared soon after with the capture of the *Haasje*, a vessel loaded with guns and ammunition which the revolutionary agent, Woyer, had persuaded the Dutch Governor at Batavia to send to the burghers of Graaff-Reinet.

We see then the administrative and political problems the British Government had fallen heir to in Cape Colony. The difficulty lay nearly all in one region, the eastern frontier of the colony at the Fish River. Up to 1770 the advance of the colonists eastward along the coast had been easy amidst thinly scattered and decaying clans of the Hottentots; but at the Fish River they encountered a formidable barrier in the shape of the great Kaffir race, themselves advancing from the east, and the question of expansion became one which meant fierce warfare with powerful tribes, and included questions of morality and jurisprudence, all the graver that the

Kaffirs were a highly organised race, living under tribal government and a well established system of laws.

The difficulty was increased for the British Government by the intractable nature of the frontier Boer. Long contact with the native races had made him suspicious and somewhat treacherous. Laws and taxes seemed to him only so many subtle devices for overreaching him ; and as he was accustomed on his solitary farm to be a law to himself in all that he did he could hardly be brought to submit to the law of the State when that did not agree with his own notions of things.

With the arrival of Lord Macartney in May 1797, General Craig's provisional governorship came to an end. The general had had some hopes indeed of obtaining himself the official position of Governor, the duties of which, especially the peaceful administrative ones, he thinks would be congenial to him ; "the country is so open to improvement" (he writes to Secretary Dundas), "that it would furnish in time of peace exactly that species of employment which is, of all others, the most congenial to my mind." It is good, he thinks, after years of war and arms, to spend one's sober years in works of peace and progress, and he learns with regret that it is the decision of his Majesty's Ministers to send out a Civil Governor, "which puts an end to every hope I had formed." He

departed with the esteem, as Dr. Theal admits, of the colonists, and received due honours from the Government, being made a Knight of the Bath, with a high appointment on the Bengal Staff. In after years his ambition to devote himself to peaceful arts and the business of colonial administration was gratified by his being sent out as Governor to Canada. Perhaps when there he often looked back with regret to the peaceful life of a Lieutenant-General.

IV

The Bushman Race—The Racial Conflict on the Northern Frontier—Van Jaarsveld's Commando at the Zeekoe River.

IT was not only on the eastern frontier that a savage warfare existed between the Boers and the natives. A still more relentless struggle had been going on for years along the northern boundary of the colony, from the Roggeveld ranges to the mountains of Sneeuwberg and Tarka. A pigmy race of savages, called by the Dutch colonists Bosjesmans or Bushmen, lived in those parts, wandering in loose bands over the desert, or occupying caverns in the mountains north of the Sneeuwberg. They had some points of resemblance to the Hottentots, but were of a lower race, with a tendency to deformities of person, which may have been due to the extreme wretchedness of their condition, living as they did in crannies of the rocks or crouching naked, as Thompson saw them, under thorn-bushes for shelter against the night winds. They were a feeble race physically, their chief weapon a diminutive arrow, poisoned at the tip,

but they were active and tireless of foot, and had more than the usual dexterity of the savage in concealing their advance or retreat. To get at them at all the Boer commandos had to take them either by surprise or treachery. Their subsistence was precarious even for savages ; at times they managed to kill wild game when that was abundant, and then there was a feast from which they never rose till their stomachs became grotesque protuberances on their emaciated figures ; but most of the time they had nothing to eat but wild roots, locusts and the larvæ of insects.

Pringle, Philip and others assert that this miserable race was at one time a pastoral people, living in comparative ease at least on the produce of their flocks and herds.¹ But as the Dutch colonists increased in number and spread over the interior, this feeble race, without any tribal organisation, was gradually driven from its pasture grounds where subsistence was easy, to the desert and the mountains. There the Bushman was forced to dig roots for a subsistence, and when that failed him to steal sheep and cattle from the Boer. There were numbers of tame Bushmen, however, as they were called, who accepted service with the farmer and looked after his herds, in return for their food and a little tobacco. In 1775 the Swedish naturalist, Sparrman, saw many of them living thus, contentedly enough, amongst the farmers

¹ Philip's *Researches in South Africa*, vol. ii. p. 2.

of the Lange Kloof district. He states that it was a common thing then for the Boers to make up a party for the capture of Bushmen to serve on their farms,¹ and a Hottentot whom he met in the same district had three Bushwomen and their children in his custody whom he was taking "home to his master for slaves." In the north-eastern parts, particularly about Camdeboo and the Sneeuwberg, the mountain Bushmen, who had the worst character as plunderers, were pursued and exterminated, Sparrman says, like wild beasts.²

It seems to be clear that about the year 1770 this warfare between the Boers and the Bushmen had assumed larger dimensions and a more relentless character. Before that time, according to both Barrow and Thompson, the Bushmen were accustomed to come openly into the colony begging, sometimes pilfering, but "they never attempted the life of any one." But in the year mentioned the Dutch Government seems to have made up its mind for a decided policy of aggressive defence, or, some might call it, expansion on the northern frontier. A commandant-general was appointed for the border; a great commando took the field in three divisions, the whole country along the great northern ranges was scoured, and the reports given in by the commander

¹ Sparrman, *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, vol. i. p. 202.

² *Idem*, p. 198.

stated that five hundred Bushmen were shot and over two hundred made prisoners, the latter no doubt mostly women and children, who were, Dr. Theal says, "apprenticed to the farmers for a term of years." One European was shot during the operations.

It was this custom of carrying their wives and children into captivity, Barrow says, "which rankled most in the breasts of the Bushmen and excited them to fierce retaliations on the Boer farmers and the Hottentots who served them as scouts." One can see, too, that the custom was a great temptation to the farmers, especially in later years, when slaves ceased to be imported and the supply of Hottentot herdsmen grew scarce. The Bushman with his slender arrow could do little against the mounted Boer and his great *roer* in the open field, but his stealthy approach might take a single victim un-awares. In the more remote and exposed districts of the Sneeuwberg and Tarka the farmer could hardly gather a few vegetables in his garden or venture five hundred yards from his house without his gun.

On the other side commandos became frequent and sanguinary, and the names of the veld-commandants on the northern border, Van der Walt, Van Jaarsveld, Nel and Van Wyck would be famous in the annals of this savage warfare, if any one, even Dr. Theal, cared to record its details. It was, of

course, man-hunting rather than fighting. Here is one day's work out of a hundred such in those years, that of an expedition to the Zeekoe River (near modern Colesberg) in 1775 under Van Jaarsveld, extracted from his own report to the Landdrost of Stellenbosch :—

August 10th.—Proceeded from Blauwe-Bank along the river about two hours, with the whole commando, to a place called by us Keerom, whence, the manners of the natives being known to me by experience, I despatched the same evening some spies to Blauwe-Bank to learn whether the Bushmen were not with the sea-cows [*which the Boers had shot and left to entice the Bushmen*]; for they will always assemble in the night where they know something is to be had.

About midnight the spies returned, saying they had seen a great number of Bushmen there, when I immediately repaired thither with the commando, waiting till day-break, which soon appeared; and having divided the commando into parties, we slew the thieves [*Van Jaarsveld uses the term here quite generically as a synonym for Bushmen*], and on searching, found one hundred and twenty-two dead; five escaped by swimming across the river.

After counting the slain, we examined their goods, *to see whether anything could be found whereby it might be ascertained that they were plunderers*; when ox-hides and horns were found, which they were carrying with them for daily use.

Pages of such reports might be quoted, but that one, as it stands, is perfect and convincing as to the character of this warfare with the Bushmen. Indeed the Boer, even when he was in other respects a just and excellent man, could see no more harm in shooting Bushmen than if they were so many rabbits.

A few days before Barrow set out from Capetown on his journey to the interior a Boer who had just come in from Graaf-Reinet called at the secretary's office. He was asked if he had found the savages numerous or troublesome on the road, and "replied *he had only shot four*, with as much composure and indifference as if he had been speaking of four partridges."

Up to the time of the British occupation in 1795 commandos were frequently out against the Bushmen, and whole kraals of them were exterminated.¹ Nevertheless at this period the Boers were not able to crush the Bushmen entirely. On the approach of a commando they generally managed, if not taken by surprise, to retire to inaccessible deserts or mountain passes where the Boers could not always get at them; and in the north-eastern corner of the colony they were able at this time to hold their ground and even forced the farmers to withdraw from the lands they occupied north of the Zeekoe River, and from parts of the Sneeuwberg and Tarka. It is at this period that Pringle's *Song of the Wild Bushman* may have its modicum of truth, after removing the fine varnish of the Campbell style:—

The countless springboks are my flock,
Spread o'er the unbounded plain;
The buffalo bendeth to my yoke,
The wild-horse to my rein.

¹ See list of commandos, Philip's *Researches*, vol. i. pp. 43-53.

My yoke is the quivering assegai,
My rein the tough bow-string ;
My bridle-curb is a slender barb,
Yet it quells the forest king.

.

Thus I am lord of the Desert Land,
And I will not leave my bounds,
To crouch beneath the Christian's hands,
And kennel with his hounds :
To be a hound and watch the flocks,
For the cruel White Man's gain.
No ! the brown Serpent of the Rocks
His den doth yet retain ;
And none who there his sting provokes,
Shall find its poison vain !

The Bushmen, wretched as their condition was, seem to have had faculties not incapable of cultivation, and in the matter of artistic talent at least they stood higher than any of the races around them. The sides of the caverns where they lived were frequently scrawled over with drawings of antelopes, ostriches, baboons, and other animals, which Barrow and other travellers consider were executed with much spirit and a true perception of what was characteristic in the object. Thompson also notes their talent for mimicry and readiness to take off in this way anything ludicrous they saw in the attitudes of the Boers or of English soldiers. The Boer thought the Bushman little better than the baboon, but perhaps the latter took his revenge in some Aristophanic click-

clacking in the caves above Tarka. The little savages were surprisingly cheerful in their wretchedness, and would often dance the whole night long in the moonlight to the sound of their *ramaakie* or guitar.

Robert Moffat, the missionary, who knew the race well and gives a very complete and candid account of them in *Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (pp. 46-54), says of them that "degraded as they really are, they can be kind and hospitable too; faithful to their charge, grateful for favours, and susceptible of kindness." "It is also habitual with them," he adds, "on receiving the smallest portion of food, to divide it with their friends and a hungry mother will not unfrequently give what she may receive to her emaciated children, without tasting it herself."

But few virtues could be expected of a people who were hunted and tracked like wild beasts to their lairs, and who mostly hid in their caverns by day, issuing only at night in search of something to eat. Unless a Bushman were caught young it was rarely that much could be done with him. The labours of the first missionary amongst them, Mr. Kicherer, seem to have had very little result, and those of the philanthropic Boers, Vischer and Botma, who tried to continue his work, less still. But the missions established

amongst them some years afterwards at Troverberg and Hephzibah were more successful according to the well-known report of the Rev. A. Faure of Graaff-Reinet, which is quoted in most of the missionary literature of that period.¹

¹ See Moffat's *Labours*, already quoted, p. 51. Also Thompson's *Travels*, vol. i., p. 405.

V

Lord Macartney's Administration—Reforms and Progress
under British Rule—The "Jacobin Party" at the Cape
—Sir George Yonge.

LORD MACARTNEY, the first titular Governor at the Cape, brought out with him the final instructions of the British Government for the administration of the colony. He was a high-spirited and courteous Irishman, with a pride that was almost vanity in the purity and rectitude of his conduct in high offices. But he was a man of great ability and large experience in the higher departments of administration. It was for these reasons no doubt that the veteran proconsul, now well on in years, was specially chosen by the Home Government to define and carry out its economic and financial policy in South Africa. His instructions are contained in a lengthy document given in the *Records*, and are worth reading as a proof of the very liberal spirit in which the British Government meant to deal with its new possession. In particular, it is prescribed to Lord Macartney, "that you do, without

delay, afford our subjects at the said settlement such relief from the fiscal oppressions under which they now labour, as you shall judge expedient, and particularly by abolishing monopolies, pre-emptions, and exclusive privileges, and prohibitions and restraints to the free exercise of their industry, either in agriculture, manufactures, or other pursuits of interior commerce." (*Records*, 1796-1799, p. 1.)

In conformity with these instructions, the old monopolies and restrictions on trade, the exorbitant taxes imposed for the privilege of selling any kind of provision to the shipping were finally abolished, and internal trade and coasting became practically free. Goods from any part of the British dominions might be imported free of duty in British ships.¹ All vessels of friendly Powers were allowed to trade with the Cape on paying a duty of five per cent. on the British goods they brought, and ten per cent. on foreign goods. The trade to the East of the Cape, however, was allowed to be carried on only by the ships of the East India Company, or ships which had received their license. And in the matter of internal trade, the Governor was obliged to do what had always been done, to fix a price (always a fair one) on the produce required for his large garrison, otherwise with a limited supply, and no resources nearer than

¹ This permission, allowing a freedom of trade most unusual at that time, was in 1802 restricted to British ports.

India and England, he would have been at the mercy of speculators. But all this represented very liberal ideas of trade for that time, and was a great improvement on the times when the interior and the foreign trade alike were under heavy restrictions, and carried on only by special privilege or connivance.

As a consequence of these reforms the returns exhibit a great growth of commerce at this period, although the exports bear an unusually small proportion to the imports on account of the peculiar circumstances of the colony, nearly all its produce being absorbed by the Capetown market in the way of supplies to the garrison and shipping. The additional taxes had been imposed, yet the revenue, which in the last year of the Dutch government had been about £20,000, rose in 1797 to £40,000, and in 1798 to over £60,000. In 1801 it had risen to £90,000. The foreign shipping calling at the Cape, mainly American, Danish and Portuguese, with a few Swedish and Prussian vessels, being allowed to trade as freely as British ships, and there being now no monopoly in the sale of provisions, this traffic, which had almost died away latterly under Dutch rule, became a great source of profit to the colonists. (See Barrow, vol. ii, p. 183.) During the same period I find from a list of prices in the *Records* that the value of the farmer's produce, his corn, mutton, beef, butter, &c., had doubled, while the price of the

imports he was most in need of, such as tea, coffee, sugar, cottons, &c., was much cheaper owing to the increased facilities of trade.¹ The matter of the rent due by the farmers to the State was also settled by Lord Macartney in a liberal way, by a proclamation which acquitted the farmers of the most distressed districts of all arrears of rent, in many cases also allowing them to stand rent free for the next six years, and in some lowering the rents to half. (See Lord Macartney's instructions to the landdrost of Graaff-Reinet ; *Records*, 1796-1799, p. 95.)

In the Civil Service the changes made were of a kind which tended to promote purity and a higher sense of responsibility amongst the officials, without giving offence to Dutch susceptibilities by any great change of forms. The Dutch Judicature and Magistracy were continued much on the old lines, and in the hands of the same officials ; but the members of the Court of Justice, most of whom had been paid by the objectionable practice of bestowing on them other lucrative employments, or privileges, or the reversion of such (see *Records*, 1796-1799, p. 134 ; also 1793-1796, p. 280), were now put on a system of fixed salaries. The practice of torturing slaves and natives, on suspicion of crime, and the infliction of barbarous forms of the death penalty were abolished, not without some grumbling on the part of the Burgher Senate,

¹ *Records*, 1793-6, p. 238.

who quoted Dutch and Roman law in support of the practice.

But a bare enumeration of official changes represents but poorly the impression one gets from these records of a good government, of a governor who was anxious to understand the needs of the colony and to do his best for it, and whose pride was to identify British rule with a pure and intelligent administration. The streets, the wharf and the fortifications, all of which had been somewhat neglected, were now put into good repair. New water conduits were made for the supply of Capetown, and the pass at Hottentot's Holland, the great route to the eastern parts of the colony, was put into shape, the first of several great undertakings of the kind, by a corps of engineers. A scientific agriculturist, Mr. Duckett, was also brought out from England to teach the farmers better methods, and the use of more modern implements, though the Boers, a most conservative race, would for long have nothing to do with him and his implements. In every department, indeed, the painstaking hand of the new government was felt. To me it seems that English energy and honesty, the steady English sense of justice which demands a firm but not a rigorous, and especially not a vengeful administration of the law, are just as conspicuous in these early records as they can be to-day in India or Egypt.

It was not wholly, I think, the language of official compliment when the whole of the Dutch officials at the Cape, the wardens of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, the members of the Burgher Council, and other bodies declared in a congratulatory address to George III. in 1800, that the inhabitants of the colony had, under British rule, "enjoyed the most perfect tranquillity and happiness," and were "daily increasing in prosperity" (*Records*, 1799-1801, p. 296). That appears to be a fair representation of public opinion except at the disturbed eastern portion of the frontier, amongst the farmers of Brintjes Hoogte and the Zuurveld.

But the reader who expects to find any direct recognition of these improvements in the pages of the official historian of South Africa will be disappointed. In his review of the administration of Lord Macartney, Dr. Theal is not only silent about such general matters as the greater security and increased value of property (except, of course, on the disturbed frontier part), and the larger and freer market provided under British rule, he omits all reference to the removal of trade restrictions, oppressive taxes and corrupt methods of levying them, as if all that which was finally carried out or confirmed by Lord Macartney need not appear in the implied comparison he is there making between British and Dutch rule.

Here is his statement of the case :

The free trade promised in 1795 also came to an end.¹ Commerce with places to the east of the Cape of Good Hope was restricted to the English East India Company, and heavy duties were placed upon goods from the westward brought in any but English ships. British goods brought from British ports in British ships were admitted free of duty. The Government resumed the power to put its own prices upon farm produce, and to compel delivery at these rates for all that was needed for the garrison and ships of war frequenting Simon's Bay. The prices fixed, however, were fair and reasonable, and the burghers did not object to sell at such rates, though among themselves they spoke very bitterly of the arbitrary rule to which they were subjected. (*The Story of the Nations : South Africa*, p. 120.)

I do not think that that paragraph could leave the ordinary reader with any other impression than that there had been little or no improvement in the administration of trade under British rule, and that there was even something unusually arbitrary in that administration, which caused discontent among the burghers.

It is true that in other parts of his work Dr. Theal has dropped sentences here and there, in one place about the very bad system of taxation under the Dutch Company, in another about its pernicious effect upon the people, but he carefully avoids bringing things together for a comparison, and is thus able in his final summary, as we see, to leave

¹ Only free internal trade had been promised by Generals Clarke and Craig.

the reader with the impression that there was no benefit whatever, moral or economic, to the colonists in the change from Dutch to British rule.¹

There is also at times the characteristic vice of the economist in Dr. Theal's reasoning. Because Lord Macartney had not at his side a superior council of Regency (which had always consisted in any case of Company's officials under the Governor's control),² therefore his rule must have been more arbitrary than that of a Wilhelm Adriaan van der Stel, or a Cornelius van de Graaff, or those Dutch commissioners who imposed the obnoxious tax on auction accounts. This kind of error is not at all natural, however, to Dr. Theal, who knows very well, one can see, how things really worked in the concrete, did he care to state all he knows. From the *Records*, one might certainly infer that the new Burgher Senate under British rule was as strong a representation of public opinion as anything that existed under the Dutch governors.

Dr. Theal's indictment (it is hardly less than that) of Lord Macartney's rule on its political side is even harsher :

His administration was free of the slightest taint of corruption, but it was conducted on very strict lines. (The larger history reads "on the strictest party lines.") Those colonists

¹ See Appendix B for Dr. Theal's latest version.

² See Van Ryneveld's Report, *Records*, 1793-1796, p. 243.

who professed to be attached to Great Britain were treated with favour, while those who preferred a republic to a monarchy were obliged to conceal their opinions or they were promptly treated as guilty of sedition. There never was a period in the history of the country when there was less freedom of speech than at this time. All the important offices were given to men who could not speak the Dutch language, and who drew such large salaries from the colonial treasury that there was little left for other purposes. An oath of allegiance to the king of England was demanded from all the burghers. Many objected, and a few did not appear when summoned to take it. The Governor was firm, dragoons were quartered upon several of those who were reluctant, and others were banished from the country.

All that sounds very formidable. Such sentences as "there never was a period in the history of the colony when there was less freedom of speech than at this time," uttered by a responsible historian, seem decisive. But every government must be tried by the standard and the circumstances of its own time; and the load of obloquy which that sentence seems to throw on Lord Macartney's rule is at once materially lightened by the mere consideration that in 1798 the very same thing might be said, with even more emphasis, alike of France and Holland under their republican governments and of England under its monarchy, and indeed of every country where the great contest with the revolutionary ideals of the French democracy had arisen. Where the government, as in England, represented the moderate traditions of constitutionalism, the ultra-radicals

were regarded as Jacobins, and their liberty of action and speech curtailed as dangerous to the State. Where the government, as in France and Holland, represented the new democratic ideals, the moderate and conservative parties were regarded as dangerous reactionaries and their liberty of speech and action suppressed.

As I have already said, the doctrines of the new French democracy, and their watchwords of liberty, fraternity and equality, had found considerable response amongst the colonists. In Capetown, as well as in the outlying districts, there was what the English governors called a Jacobin party, and there is evidence in the *Records* that active intriguing was carried on between that party and the agents of the French Republic. Two attempts indeed were made by French ships to land stores of war and volunteers in remote eastern parts of the colony. It never came to much, and ultimately, as in most other countries, when the democratic ideals of France developed into the oppressive autocracy of Napoleon, died a natural death. Yet at the time it naturally enough alarmed the British governors and occasioned some slight repressive measures on the part of Lord Macartney; one notorious agitator, who refused to take the oath of allegiance, was sent out of the country, a measure which the Dutch governors had been accustomed to use freely on less provocation. The

particular case, however, which Dr. Theal gives as an example of Lord Macartney's severity, is that of Mr. Eksteen, a citizen of Capetown. Mr. Eksteen, it seems, issued cards of invitation for his daughter's marriage, which, instead of having the usual superscription "Mr." were addressed "Citoyen," in Revolutionary style. Lord Macartney simply called upon him to apologise and give bonds for good behaviour. It was a small matter, no doubt, but feeling ran high in those days, and the use of the word "Citoyen" meant, of course, a profession of the new democratic principles, and was designed to be offensive to the authorities. But the offender suffered no personal injury, and in the France of the same period, or at Batavia, under some Van Imhoff, a similar challenge to the authorities might have cost the offending individual his life or his liberty. Here, as elsewhere, Dr. Theal's indictment of British rule in South Africa is open to the charge that it takes no note of the circumstances of the time, but criticises by a standard of our own day, which even yet is applicable only to British rule and British ideas of justice in the case of colonies and dependencies.

Dr. Theal makes much also of the number of Englishmen in the Civil Service, and the salaries paid them. Besides the Lieutenant-Governor, who was also the commander of the forces, Lord Macartney had ten Englishmen in the Civil Service drawing

salaries which amounted altogether to about £11,000. The heaviest item was the salary of Lord Macartney himself, who, as an old and experienced pro-consul, received £12,000, including table-money. It was about double what the Dutch governors had received. But they had had large perquisites, farms and country houses being kept up for them by the Company, sometimes unwittingly, it is true, and their household expenses, including servants and horses, paid. Like the other officials too, their salaries were partly paid by allowing them to collect certain taxes or fees, so that I suspect the English governor's establishment did not really cost the colony much more, while the revenue under Lord Macartney being double what it had been under the old Dutch Company, was better able to bear it.¹

Lord Macartney had been sent out as one of the most experienced of Britain's high officials to put the affairs of the colony on their new basis. Having performed his work and finding the climate of Africa trying to a constitution somewhat weakened by years and disease, he resigned his appointment and left the colony in November, 1798.

¹ Captain Percival states positively, and gives figures to show, that the Dutch establishment was greater in numbers than the English one, and more costly when all was told. See his book, *Account of the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 325. See also on this point Wilberforce Bird, p. 141.

Unfortunately, the British Government was not so happy in the choice of a successor. The lot fell on Sir George Yonge, whose record, while it may not be quite so bad as Dr. Theal makes out, is certainly far from clear. He is decidedly the black sheep in the list of the British Governors of Cape Colony. Sir George was a high-going, magnificent, free-handed sort of man, always ready to enter upon extensive improvements, new barracks, great experimental farms, a fine botanic garden, fountains and fish-ponds for Government House, and such like things. He spent his table allowance also, freely, and gave the first public ball at Capetown, 350 guests, and dancing till four in the morning. "I found it gave general satisfaction," he reports to the Home authorities. So being in want of money, he imposed, contrary to the articles of capitulation, some new taxes on grain and timber, new licenses on game and billiard-tables, which were naturally considered as grievances by the inhabitants. In a rash way also he granted contracts for supplying the government with cattle and for cutting timber under conditions which virtually made them monopolies. He appointed new commissioners for the supervision of the government woodlands, tasters of wine and brandy, &c. In most of these things his intentions seem to have been good, to prevent, namely, the Government from being imposed upon by a combination of cattle-

breeders, to encourage Mr. Duckett, the scientific farmer whom the British Government had sent out for the improvement of Cape agriculture, to secure a decent quality of wine for the troops and so forth. On the whole the report of the commission appointed to inquire into his doings acquits him of any personal share in corruption.

But certain members of his family, who occupied confidential posts at Government House, made a bad use of their position to secure for themselves some of these new offices and to further applications for concessions and contracts on the understanding that they should receive a percentage of the profits. Sir George seems to have placed too much faith in their representations, and lent himself in a careless way at least to their schemes; a rash, free-handed, profuse man, and too indulgent to his friends, but not himself corrupt or a profit-seeker. He writes to Lord Hobart that he returns from the colony a much poorer man than he came to it. Dr. Theal compares his rule to the worst days of Van de Graaff and the Dutch governors; but the *Records* show that within the administration itself, in the persons of the English officials and the naval captains on the station, there existed a decided check on anything like open corruption (see the case of Mr. Jessup, chief-searcher of customs, *Records*, 1799-1801, page 161). Sir George was recalled, not slowly

nor with high honours like Governor Van de Graaff, but in disgrace, on the first hint the Home Government received of maladministration. Readers will find the extent of his delinquencies impartially stated by the Commission of Inquiry, *Records*, March 16, 1802.

VI

Adriaan Van Jaarsveld's Insurrection The Kaffir Raids of 1799—The Government's Border Policy—Bruintjes Hoogte revolts again—General Dundas and Honoratus Maynier—Commando against the Kaffirs Death of Tjaart Van der Walt.

IT was during the administration of Sir George Yonge that the second insurrection of the Boers of Graaf-Reinet against British rule took place. From a variety of causes, which I have already spoken of in a previous chapter, that district had not settled down so readily as the rest of the colony. The most turbulent spirits of the colony were congregated there, genuine frontier ruffians like Coenraad du Buys and his gang, who were constantly mixed up in Kaffir squabbles and intrigues for the sake of spoil, and from passing much of their lives in the Kaffir kraals had fallen into many of the ways of these savages. Being so far away from Capetown also, the district had continued to be a kind of centre for intrigues with French agents and the Dutch governors in the East Indies. Preparations had actually been made

for the landing of French volunteers and ammunition in Algoa Bay, in aid of a general rising which was to take place in the eastern districts of the colony. It was expected, too, that Du Buys and Jan Botha, the leading spirits of that particularly lawless gang I have mentioned, would be able to induce the great chief Gaika, and perhaps also the Kaffir tribes on the west side of the Fish River, to join in the rising.¹

No doubt the real cause of their disaffection was the refusal of the British Governors to allow them to cross the boundary of the Fish River and take possession of the Kaffir country "as far as the Kat River and even, if it might be, unto the Koonap." That fertile district, the garden of Kaffirland, was a constant temptation to the Boers of Brintjes Hoogte, who had already taken up some "places" in the district when they were recalled by Lord Macartney. That Governor had also positively prohibited all ordinary intercourse between the colonists and the Kaffirs, with a view of putting a stop to the constant quarrelling and raiding between them, and had thus made the illicit trade in cattle more difficult.² Whatever the cause was, the insurrection was

¹ See Fiscal van Rhyneveld's Investigation and Report, *Records*, 1799-1801, p. 284.

² For Lord Macartney's frontier policy, see *Records*, 1796-9, p. 95. It is just and humane in spirit, but without specific provisions.

precipitated by an incident which throws a very clear light on the difficulties the Government had to cope with in that region.

One of the most prominent burghers in the Graaff-Reinet district, a Heemraad or local councillor and a commandant in the field, was Adriaan van Jaarsveld. His career may be taken as a fair specimen of the life of a frontier Boer. In his earlier days he had owned a farm north, in the Sneenwberg Mountains, and had led many a commando against the Bushmen in these parts, sometimes surprising and exterminating whole camps of them. But in these days the Bushmen were still able to hold on to their dens in that wild district, and Adriaan, tiring of the interminable conflict, came south to Brintjes Hoogte in 1776, with others of the northern farmers, to take up lands in that newly opened district. Here they came in contact with the Kosa-Kaffir tribes, and particularly with the Imidange (Mandankæ or Amandanka, write the older travellers). For a time Boers and Kaffirs seem to have lived on decent terms with each other. But, probably from the inveterate habits of both, occasions of hostility arose, and in December of 1780, a commando was got together under the leadership of Van Jaarsveld.

The Boers began by a famous act of treachery which was afterwards brought home to Adriaan. They invited the Imidange to a meeting for the

purpose of discussing their mutual claims, and having, according to custom, spread beads and tobacco on the ground as presents to the Kaffirs, they shot the latter down as they were eagerly scrambling for them. That is the tale as given by Mr. Brownlee, the well-known missionary, who was long amongst the Kaffirs.¹ Dr. Theal's version, introduced casually and far apart from his main account of the commando, is not substantially different as to the fact of the treachery and slaughter.² Van Jaarsveld's commando kept the field from May to July of 1781, and returned with a spoil of over five thousand cattle. The Imidange abandoned Bruintjes Hoogte and sought refuge with their countrymen in the Zuurveld. So began and ended the first Kaffir war.

Later on Adriaan was a leader in the rebellion of 1794 against the Dutch Government, when the Graaff-Reineters hoisted the tricolour and expelled their landdrost; and his is one of the names appended to that first diplomatic letter of the Graaff-Reinet Boers to General Craig. Adriaan was now advanced in years, but age had not tamed his blood or taught him caution. In 1798 this respected burgher

¹ Brownlee's account of the Amakosas is given in full by Thompson (*Travels and Adventures*) in the Appendix to his second volume.

² Compare *History of South Africa*, 1652-1795, vol. ii., p. 173 and p. 257.

and magistrate forged a receipt for interest payable on a loan he had received. That sounds bad in the ears of a civilised community, but to Adriaan and the Brintjes Hoogte burghers it seemed no great matter. His creditor was a Capetown corporation, the Orphan Chamber, a kind of trust company for widows and orphans; and to cheat a Capetown creditor seemed perhaps as natural to him as deforcing a sheriff's officer was to Rob Roy. Still it shows the state of things with which a British Governor had to deal with in Graaff-Reinet. Of course Adriaan was summoned before the court of justice at Capetown, and on refusing to appear was arrested by a small party of soldiers under the authority of the magistrate in Graaff-Reinet. But the burghers were alarmed at this phenomenon of the long arm of the law extending itself so impressively into their district; it was a new thing, contumacy under the Dutch rule, Barrow says, being practised with impunity on the frontier; accordingly a party of Prinsloos, Krugers, Bothas and others assembled, and having first successfully wiled the landdrost into recalling six of the dragoons who guarded Adriaan, rescued him by force. They then took possession of the district in the name of the 'Voice of the People,' kept the landdrost, Bresler, a prisoner in the Drostdy, and in danger of his life for some months. The burghers of the Sneeuwberg, and some

other districts of Graaff-Reinet, professed to be on the side of the law and the landdrost, but did not think proper to make a fight of it, or even appear on the scene till British troops despatched by the Governor arrived. The malcontents, about 150 in number, then submitted unconditionally, about twenty of them, amongst whom was Van Jaarsveld, were made prisoners and taken to Capetown for trial, where the Court of Justice pronounced them guilty and sentenced three to death. The rest were dismissed with a warning.¹

Mr. Theal is afflicted over the severity shown by the British Governor on this occasion; the poor burghers, the brave old commandant, Adriaan van Jaarsveld, never expected such a thing as to be carried away prisoners to Capetown. It was but a petty revolt, he says, easy to quell. As a matter of fact, Brigadier Vandeleur, who led the British troops into Graaff-Reinet, reported that it was quite a dangerous affair. "The present disturbances," writes the brigadier, "seem to be of a nature which requires immediate suppression, otherwise there is no saying where they may end. The quantity of ammunition which the disaffected have contrived to get into their hands,

¹ The death sentence was never carried out, but poor old Van Jaarsveld, an intelligent man who wrote down observations of things and probably read the *Buiten-Leven* on a Sunday, died in prison soon after.

added to the degree of system and regularity which has hitherto regulated their proceedings, convinces me that the game is a deeper one than was at first apprehended." In fact, as we learn from the letters and reports concerning this affair, which appear in the *Records*, it was part of a plan for a general rising which had for some time been preparing, and stood in close connection with a network of intrigue which included the Kaffir tribes as well as French and Dutch forces in the East.

The worst result of Van Jaarsveld's insurrection was that it destroyed for the time that co-operation between the frontier Boers and the Cape Government on which the security of the frontier depended. Not one of the parties concerned, Britons, Boers, Hottentots, Kaffirs, could now trust the other. The Kaffir clans in the Zuurveld, the broken Imidange most active amongst them, says Vanderkemp, now took advantage of the disorganised condition of the Graaff-Reinet district to raid the farms, slaughtering such of the farmers as chanced to fall into their hands. The British forces and the Boers united in defence of the colony. But the Hottentot herdsmen, who had deserted the Boer farms and joined the Hottentot corps in the British force during the insurrection, became alarmed that in the end they would be left to the vengeance of a race whose cruelty they well knew, and some of them in their desperation joined the raiding Kaffirs. Gaika,

too, the chief of the great Kaffir tribe on the farther side of the Fish River, showed signs of restlessness, his suspicions of the British Governor's designs being no doubt adroitly played upon by the fugitive Boers, who had found refuge at his kraal on the failure of the insurrection. Altogether it was a very mixed affair, and required considerate treatment as well as firmness and a display of strength in order to compose matters, otherwise a great war with Kaffirs and Hottentots combined might easily be kindled ; a war which would serve no purpose, either of justice or policy. Such was the opinion of General Dundas, who marched to the frontier with a large force of troops to establish order (see Dundas's letter and answers to Sir George Yonge, *Records*, 1799-1801, p. 57). The General, supported by Mr. Maynier, the landdrost or chief magistrate of Graaff-Reinet, who always stood firmly on the principle that if you kept faith with the Kaffirs they would keep faith with you, resolved to try pacific measures ; a treaty was accordingly made, to which the great chief Gaika at least always remained faithful ; presents were given to the Kaffirs ; money compensation, distribution of captured cattle made to the burghers, and affairs assumed their normal condition. To strike at the root of such troubles, the Government established a Register of the Hottentots serving with the farmers, and made regulations to prevent cruelty or

oppression of the former ; it also resolved to enforce the laws regarding illicit trade in cattle more strictly, and to establish a fort in the district, with a garrison sufficient to impress Kaffirs and burghers alike with a sense of the presence of law and authority.

But the burghers were disappointed. They had expected a big raid, with great spoil in the way of cattle, and perhaps occupation of new lands, instead of which they declared they had not even got full compensation for their losses. There was some truth in their complaint, but they overlooked the fact that they themselves, or at least a turbulent faction amongst them, were largely to blame for all that had occurred.

Dr. Theal also is greatly grieved at the peaceful termination of this affair. He veils its connection with the insurrection of the Boers, and represents it, just as he represents the policy of the Dutch Government in a similar case, the Kaffir war of 1793, as an ignominious surrender of the frontiersman's rights to the high-handed insolence of the Kaffir. To get a parallel to it he goes back to the early history of England when the Anglo-Saxons used to buy off the hosts of plundering Danes that invaded their country. (See his *Story of the Nations : South Africa*, p. 125.) But that is a very rough and ready kind of judgment, and is certainly very far from doing justice to the grounds upon which General Dundas, the commander of the British force, made his decision. In

his report to the Governor at Capetown, the General, after remarking that the late disorders at Graaff-Reinet seemed to him to have been "of a nature to threaten, in their probable effects, the destruction of the colony," proceeds to state what in his opinion is the only just and honourable policy for the British Government to pursue on the frontier, and the only one, moreover, which has a chance of giving peace and security to that troubled region. "I must observe to your Excellency," he writes, "that to the habits of licentiousness, injustice and cruelty of the white inhabitants with the system of oppression under which the native Hottentots of the colony have lived, and the injuries the Kaffirs have sometimes sustained, many of the evils, or insurrections here, are to be ascribed; therefore I am decidedly of opinion that unless justice is enforced with more strictness than has hitherto been done in all the dealings of the different descriptions of inhabitants with each other, the general tranquillity cannot be placed upon a footing of perfect security." (*Records*, 1799-1801, p. 15.)

There was nothing new in the conclusion at which the British General had arrived. The same opinion had been expressed by all the magistrates and special commissioners who had held office in Graaff-Reinet, all of them Dutchmen and men who had passed their lives or seen much service in the colony. Even their own clergymen, the Rev. Mr. Manger and the Rev.

Mr. Ballot, tired of the lawlessness of the Graaff-Reient Boers; and each in succession gave up his charge during these troubles, leaving the district without regular ministration till 1806.

Dr. Theal has no difficulty, however, in waving aside all opinions unfavourable to the claims of the Boers of Graaff-Reinet. He seems to take it as an axiom that an educated Dutch gentleman, however experienced he might be in provincial administration, was incapable of giving a candid or sound opinion on the affairs of the frontier, if he happened to be a magistrate appointed by the Dutch or the British Governors. He makes an effort, in particular, to discredit the evidence of Mr. Maynier by suggesting that that functionary's reports were drawn up to curry favour with the successive authorities, Dutch and British, at Capetown. Dr. Theal makes no attempt at proving his allegation, and I can find no grounds for such an opinion except what Dr. Theal well knows to be the very unreliable complaints and suspicions of the Graaff-Reineters themselves, a race of men suspicious to the degree of absurdity. My own opinion, after reading those *Records*, which contain Mr. Maynier's official correspondence and the reports of English generals and others who were intimately acquainted with him and his district, is that he was an able, honest, and very courageous man.

No doubt the British authorities were influenced

by practical considerations as well as by principles of humanity and justice in the policy which they adopted. The eagerness of the frontier Boer for wars which would extend the boundaries of the colony, and allow him to occupy the fine grazing lands owned by the Kaffirs between the mountain ranges and the sea, opened up no fascinating prospects to the Cape Government. It meant great wars and a ruthless extermination of the Kaffirs; it meant difficult and expensive military expeditions, it involved problems of military protection, a line of frontier forts for one thing, problems of administration and government in remote inaccessible districts with the most intractable class of subjects. The problem as it existed was difficult enough. General Dundas, in his report to Sir George Yonge after his expedition, states that there were 300 miles of a Kaffir frontier, bordered all the way by the settlements of farmers; and he adds that he thinks it impossible to guard that extent of frontier from Kaffir invasion by any number of military positions they could establish. Nor could the frontier farmer of that time make his way alone and unsupported by the Government. They were not always ready and willing to act together on commandos, and a great Kaffir raid could send all Graaff-Reinet flying west of the Gamtoos River. In short, the condition of the colony and its resources at this time did not allow of a policy of expansion on

the Kaffir frontier, even if the Government had been at one with the frontiersmen in desiring it.

But the Boer of the frontier, with his inbred hate of the coloured race and his greed of territory, was ready to risk anything. He had a strong feeling of his superior rights as a white man and a Christian to dispossess his heathen neighbours, and had no sympathy with the policy of the Cape authorities, whether it was dictated by a sense of expediency or a sense of justice. The question of expansion always underlay the troubles of the Government on the frontier; and although it is not mentioned by Judge Cloete, or Dr. Theal, or in Piet Retief's proclamation in this connection, the conflict between the Cape Government and the frontier Boer on this question was one of the chief causes which led to the great trek in 1836.

In July, 1801, two years after the Van Jaarsveld affair, there was another insurrection amongst the Boers of Bruintjes Hoogte. The chief cause seems to have been a quarrel between them and their landdrost, Honoratus Maynier, as to the principles on which their Hottentot servants, and the Hottentot race generally, should be treated. The landdrost insisted on the proper execution of the laws for registering and supervising their contracts with Hottentot servants, and in general he gave the Hottentots the ordinary protection of the law which hitherto had

been a figment, as far as they were concerned in that district. For example, he had given shelter at the drostdy to some Hottentots whom the Boers accused of murder, and demanded to be handed over to them for summary punishment. Maynier very properly refused till a statement of the case should be made and evidence produced. The response of the Boers to this is a ludicrous example of their notions regarding evidence. Field-cornet Roets sent Mr. Maynier a little Hottentot boy as witness, with the following note: "The little Hottentot boy would not confess. I have been busy with him for half an hour with fair means, then I gave him three strokes [*on examination it proved to be over three dozen*] with the sjambok, thereupon he confessed that, &c., &c."¹ But we must remember that this manner of extracting evidence from slaves and natives had been customary and legal in the colony before Lord Macartney abolished it.

Maynier had also offended the Boers by the encouragement he gave to Dr. Vanderkemp and the missionaries at Graaff-Reinet, especially by allowing them the use of the church there for a congregation of slaves and Hottentots. That is Dr. Philip's story and Dr. Vanderkemp's.² Dr. Theal's is that the Boers

¹ *Records*, 1801—3, p. 324.

² Vanderkemp's Letters, *Evangelical Magazine*, 1803, p. 170; Dr. Philip's *Researches*, vol. i., p. 69.

objected to it being used as barracks by the Hottentot corps. Both are true.

Another cause of offence with the landdrost was that although he was willing to authorise small field-cornet's parties to seek for stolen cattle or make reprisals, he would not allow great commandos which would shoot down old Kaffir kraals, and sweep them clean of cattle.¹

Accordingly the Boers of Bruintjes Hoogte and the Zwartkops (the better class of the Sneeuwberg and Camdeboo held aloof) rose in arms again and assailed the drostdy of Graaff-Reinet twice, but being beaten off by the few dragoons and Hottentots there, retired in a mutinous body to the Bamboosberg, an inaccessible mountain region, and waited events, perfectly aware of the excitement their movements would produce amongst Kaffirs and Hottentots as suspicious as themselves.²

At length in November 1801 General Dundas sent Major Sherlock with 300 picked men to Graaff-Reinet to invite the Boers to return to their allegiance, offering to overlook the affair if they did. He also as a matter of policy recalled Maynier for explanations.

By the end of the year the news of the Peace of Amiens ("Preliminary Articles"), and of the decision to give back the Cape to the Dutch, had reached the

¹ See *Records*, 1801-3, pp. 283-328.

² *Records*, 1801-3, p. 26, 53, 59.

Colony and added to the uncertainty of the situation. Numbers of Hottentots fled from the Colony and the service of the farmers, and joined the Kaffirs beyond the Fish River, and depredations became more frequent than ever. Maynier, who was then in Cape-town replying to the charges against him—mostly absurd suspicions, and all disproven (see *Records*, 1801-3, p. 302), strongly advised the General against consenting to a great commando, which he said would immediately proceed to destroy the Kaffir kraals, and thus unite the Kaffirs and Hottentots in one mass against the Colony, in which case the commando would in all probability be defeated. Leave the Kaffirs their part of the Zuurveld, he advised, without continually alarming them by expeditions, and they will give you little trouble.

Dundas, however, authorised a great commando, all Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet, under the famous Tjaart van der Walt. The commandant, a man of great courage and resolution, attacked the Kaffirs and Hottentots in the district of the Sunday River, making no distinction, Dr. Vanderkemp complains, between marauders and quiet-living kraals. For eight weeks the fighting went on without any decisive result, but the end of it came on the 8th August, when Tjaart van der Walt fell in a fight near the Kouga River. He had been leading commandos for more

than thirty years against the wild Bushmen of the Nieuwveld mountains, where he lived, and had won his lands, like any Norman baron of old on the Welsh border, by conquest and expulsion of the natives ; but the Hottentot was a deadly marksman with the musket, and his bullet had avenged the slaughtered hordes of the pigmy race. Tjaart's son, too, had fallen in this disastrous campaign.

"Never was the loss of a single man," writes Dr. Theal, "so fatal to the success of an enterprise." I am not sure that it was succeeding very much before Tjaart's death, but at any rate after that event the Boer commando at once dispersed, and a panic ensued on the frontier. Maynier's prediction had proved quite correct ; the Boers could not at that time keep the field against the combined forces of the Hottentots and Kaffirs. The Hottentots pursued their victorious course nearly as far westward as Mossel Bay, where they were met and driven back by a body of British troops acting along with part of the Swellendam contingent.

General Dundas was now obliged to withdraw his troops in order to evacuate Capetown according to the terms of the Peace of Amiens ; and to provide for the safety of the Colony another large commando was called out for the 20th December, although it did not assemble till some time in January. By that time

the Boers were left to their own counsels, and might have undertaken anything they thought themselves capable of achieving. They did not attempt anything, however, but made an arrangement with the Kaffirs and Hottentots, agreeing not to molest each other, and leaving the former in possession of the Zuurveld.

VII

The Restored Dutch Rule (1803-1806)—The Second British Occupation—The Condition of the Slave in Cape Colony—Olive Schreiner's Testimony—The Condition of the Hottentots.

THE management of Cape Colony was a heavy responsibility the British Government had assumed as part of the price they must pay for the possession of the Cape of Good Hope as a naval station. The difficulty of the task had already, after a few years of rule, partly disclosed itself to them, but its real immensity could be appreciated by none of that generation. The gigantic racial problems it involved, the certainty of conflict between the claims of British supremacy and the national sentiment of the Dutch inhabitants, the different moral standard which could not but exist between the polity of one of the most civilised nations of Europe, and the crude ideas of a community mostly composed of illiterate farmers and rude frontiersmen—these were all difficulties bound to reach an acute stage in South Africa. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when all

colonial government was of a semi-despotic nature, these things were more lightly thought of than they are to-day.

At one time, however, it seemed as if the expensive task (for such it turned out to be) of protecting and nursing the Cape Colony into maturity, with all the other South African responsibilities and burdens to which that inevitably led, was to be spared the British people.

The original intention of the British Government had been to occupy the Cape only as a provisional measure, and in the name of the Prince of Orange, if they could obtain undisputed entrance on these terms. Even after the enforced capitulation of the Dutch garrison, they professed for a time at least to hold it only as caretakers. But as the chances of the House of Orange seemed to die away for ever with the growing power and prestige of the French Republic, the feeling evidently strengthened amongst the British Ministers, that they could not afford to let the Cape go. It seemed to be only a question between France and England as to which of them should fall heir to such important strategic positions for commerce with the East, as Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope, positions which Holland, whose navy, as Lord Rosebery neatly puts it, disappeared from history with the Battle of Camperdown (1797), was no longer capable of protecting. As Captain Blankett, of the

Royal Navy, wrote to the Admiralty, "what was a feather in the hands of Holland, will become a sword in those of France." But Napoleon was by no means inclined to see a naval station like the Cape pass into the hands of his rivals, if he could prevent it ; and one of the stipulations of the peace which he made with England in 1802 (the illusive peace of Amiens, hailed with delight by both peoples) was that the Cape of Good Hope should be restored to Holland. Restored it accordingly was in January, 1803, after some haggling and delay, due to the reluctance of the British Government to give up their prize for a peace which they felt could be little more than an armistice.

The three years of restored Dutch Rule (1803-6), the rule of the Batavian Republic, as it was now called, made no material alteration in the condition of the colony. On the Kaffir frontier the situation remained unchanged. General Janssens, a humane and judicious man, adopted a conciliatory policy and tried persuasion, just as Lord Macartney had done, on the Kaffirs of the Zuurveld to remove beyond the Fish River. But the savage tribes are not to be persuaded by words after force has conspicuously failed. With the Hottentots there was no trouble at all. They were peaceably located within the Colony about the Gamtoos River, and many of them, Dr. Theal says, professed their readiness to enter the

service of the farmers if only they could be sure of good treatment.

Cattle thieving and reprisals of course continued to be the ordinary state of things on the frontier, but Captain Alberti, the Dutch soldier whom Governor Janssens had made landdrost of Uitenhage (a new district carved out of old Graaff-Reinet and including Brintjes Hoogte and the Zuurveld), was as emphatic as ever Maynier was in declaring that the Kaffirs, if justly treated, were well disposed, and that "there was nothing to fear from the bulk of the Kaffir nation."

In civil affairs Commissioner de Mist, Janssens's colleague, had some philosophic ideas about secular public schools, a Board of Education and other matters, but they were too advanced for the people and did not come to anything.

A notable project during this period was that of Baron van Hogendorp, a Dutch gentleman who had had a distinguished official career under the Stadtholder, to whose party he belonged. He was wealthy, and having a bent for economic studies and enterprises, had conceived the patriotic scheme of peopling a district of Cape Colony with a class of agricultural emigrants. With the approval of the Dutch Government at home he spent considerable sums in fitting out and transporting a party of Dutch emigrants, "industrious persons," who were to form a settlement

of real agriculturists and farmers living without slave labour.

The Colonial Government, which at first had professed itself in favour of his scheme, eventually turned cool towards it, locked up his agricultural implements at Capetown, and refused to grant him the land he asked for near Plettenberg's Bay. Instead of that district, where there was plenty of water and the timber of the immense Knysna forest for his saw-mill, as well as an excellent harbour for export to Capetown, they assigned him an entirely unsuitable location near Hout's Bay, some three leagues from Capetown, where it was impossible for him to keep his workmen from being drawn to the capital by the higher wages offered. They advised him also, he states, to buy slaves and put his settlement on that basis.

At any rate, whatever their motives were, perhaps, as Van Hogendorp hints, the narrow-minded opposition of Capetown merchants, or perhaps because Van Hogendorp was a Director of the Missionary Society and had some idea of working in connection with Vanderkemp's station in that district,¹ they effectually ruined his enterprise. "I could only withdraw," he writes, "and ask for compensation."

When the Batavian Government at the Cape sur-

¹ See *Evangelical Magazine*, 1804, p. 475 (Vanderkemp's Letter).

rendered to the British forces in 1806, the Dutch authorities seem to have bethought themselves a little repentantly of Van Hogendorp's patriotic scheme, and attempted to insert an article in the capitulation binding the British Government to give him such rights "as it shall appear from the public records the Batavian Government meant to have given." Van Hogendorp, however, tired of long discouragement and judging that the time was now past, declined to continue his enterprise, and only memorialised the British Government for compensation and assistance in winding up his affairs.¹ That was the end of a scheme of Dutch emigration which, had Holland possessed the resources in population and money, might have materially affected the destinies of the Colony. Fifteen years afterwards the British Government undertook the same business on a much larger scale and carried it out with success.

In 1804 the war between France and Britain had been resumed, and as an inevitable consequence a British expedition again sailed for the Cape. General Janssens had made every preparation for the attack, but his resources were limited and the Cape was occupied with little more fighting than on the previous occasion. Of the burghers only about two hundred and fifty appeared to oppose the British, mostly from

¹ See Van Hogendorp's case in the *Records*, 1806-9, pp. 136-149.

the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein districts. There is not a single name from the well-known names of Brintjes Hoogte and the Nieuwveld amongst those whom General Janssens distinguished by mention. No doubt it was a long way to come ; but the Boers were evidently languid in the matter. They probably thought that it made no great difference to them whether the *grootte heer*, or aristocratic official who imposed their taxes, came from the Hague or from London. Except for a few officials at Capetown the personnel of the administration remained the same in either case.

In January 1806, then, the British Government took up its old task in Cape Colony, just where it had left it. The worst of it was that this task was not growing easier as time went on, but rather increasing in difficulty. The Boers were really a rude aristocracy, living on a basis of slavery and cheap native labour. One great difficulty, therefore, which the Government had to deal with was the condition of the subject races in the colony. In England civilisation was at this period making rapid advances along the line of humanitarian ideas. In 1807, after many years of agitation, the law abolishing the ocean trade in slaves was passed by the British Parliament, and there was also a strong movement in favour of legislation to protect slaves and native servants in the British colonies from the violence or injustice of their

masters. In this matter, therefore, a conflict was as inevitable between such different standards of civilisation as that of the British nation and that of the Boers, as it afterwards proved to be between the Northern and Southern States of America.

The slaves in Cape Colony were mainly of three classes, the negro from Madagascar or Mozambique, the Malay, and the Africander, as the name was then used, that is, the offspring of a Cape Dutchman and a slave girl. The first class was the least valuable and generally used for inferior work, such as cutting timber and labouring in the field. The Malays were a higher class of slaves much employed in trades as carpenters, painters, &c., and generally bringing in a regular revenue to their masters. The Africander slave was the most valuable and much in request for domestic service and confidential employments. The women of this class in particular were smart, often dressed well, and were sometimes treated by their mistresses more like companions than slaves.

It is true, I think, as Dr. Theal asserts, that in no country on earth was the lot of the slave so light as in South Africa. The great majority of the slaves were held in Capetown and the neighbouring districts, and their value as property after the abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807 soon became too great to allow of them being ill-treated or even unduly exposed. But the country slaves who worked in the fields had

generally a hard lot, being coarsely fed and often overworked. No doubt their condition was better than that of the slaves who were driven in gangs to labour on the sugar plantations of the West Indies ; but even in the case of the best class of slaves their lot can hardly be described as a light one. No class of slaves was permitted marriage, although they had relations amongst themselves which the better class of them considered binding ; even in Bird's time (1822) many of their Dutch masters were still stubbornly opposed to their education or instruction in Christianity, and considered it superfluous to teach them anything but the sixth and eighth commandments. They might be sold away from their families, and this was likely to happen if their owner died. When they became old and worn out they were apt to be starved and neglected, however faithful they had been. The laws, as administered, afforded them but a feeble protection from the passions or the avarice of a brutal master, and we all know that an authority which is almost absolute is certain often to be abused. Those who have read Olive Schreiner's *Stray Thoughts about South Africa*, will remember the dark domestic tragedies she hints at there as certainly not infrequent in those earlier times :

Old white men and women (she writes) are still living in South Africa, who can remember how, in their early days [*say about 1820*] they saw men with guns out in the beautiful woods

at Newlands hunting runaway slaves. They can tell what a mistress once did when a slave became pregnant by her master ; and there are stories about hot ovens. Such stories, as the story of Dirk, whose master seduced his wife, and Dirk bitterly resented it, "and one day," says the narrator, "we children saw Dirk taken across the yard into the wine-house ; we heard he was to be flogged. For some days after we fancied we heard noises in the cellar ; one night, in the moonlight, we heard something, and got up and looked out ; and we saw something slipped across the yard by three men ; we children dared say nothing, because my grandfather never let any one remark about the slaves ; but we were sure it was Dirk's body."

Olive Schreiner will not be suspected of darkening the traits of Boer character ; but light as her touch on this phase of Boer history is meant to be, that tale of Dirk has lost nothing of its tragic character in her hands. And when you consider that in these days, according to the same authority, out of every four children born to a slave mother, three were the children of the white man who was her master, you can easily understand that in the household of the Boer, living far from society or immediate control of any kind, there were often domestic tragedies. There may be nothing new in these tragedies, as Olive Schreiner remarks : " It is all as old as the time of the Romans and Chaldeans," she says ; " to be surprised at it is folly, to imply that it is peculiar to South Africa and the outcome of the abnormal structure of the Boers is a lie." Most true ; but in the second decade of the nineteenth century—the time to which by

calculation her stories must refer—it was a state of things sure to breed disagreement between the Boers and the representatives of a country where Clarksons and Wilberforces were a power.

The condition of the Hottentot race within the Colony was in general hardly any better than that of the slaves, and in some respects it seems to have been even worse. The Hottentots were the original inhabitants of the southern corner of Africa, and at the time of Van Riebeeck's settlement at the Cape were found in numerous clans, Goringhaiquas, Cockoquas, Erigriquas, on the west coast, and Hessequas, Attaquas Outeniquas and others on the east, names and tribes which have long passed out of the history of South Africa. They seem to have lived in ease on the produce of their flocks and herds, and though quarrelling occasionally over their pasture grounds were on the whole, like their later representatives, a people of mild and indolent disposition, possessing neither the characteristic energy nor the ferocity of savage races.

The tribal organisation of the Hottentots was weak, their chiefs having but little authority and no cohesion existing among the different clans. Consequently the colonists, helped perhaps by two great plagues of small-pox which broke out amongst them, (1713 and 1755), found little difficulty in dispossessing them of their ancient pasture grounds, and by the

middle of the eighteenth century their *territorial* occupation of the country was reduced to a few kraals inhabiting inferior tracts passed over by the Boers.¹ The great bulk of the race became dependents on the Boer and filled his farmstead with an abject train of herdsmen and servants, fed on cheap flesh and remunerated at the end of the year with a present of tobacco and perhaps a couple of sheep. The system of enforced "apprenticeship" of Hottentot children born on Boer farms also operated to keep whole families in practical servitude.

Their treatment varied, of course, with the temper of their master. But he, the descendant of a Frisian peasant or German mercenary, was of no gentle kind, and while it might be tolerable there was nothing in these days to prevent it being excessively harsh, as it frequently was in the remoter districts. To be tied up to the waggon wheel and flogged with the heavy sjambok, while the Boer smoked one, or two, or three pipes, according to his judgment of the misdemeanour, or to receive a charge of small shot in his legs seem to have been no uncommon degrees of punishment for an angry Boer to use with his unfortunate Hottentot servant. What worse forms of torture might be inflicted by brutal masters the reader may find in Barrow, Kay and other writers.²

¹ See Sparrman's account of them, vol. i., p. 241.

² Barrow, vol. ii., chap. 2, p. 97 ; Kay, pp. 436, 437 ; Pringle,

The average Boer may have been in his ordinary mood no more cruel than the average Briton or Frenchman, but he was certainly coarser in his treatment of natives and animals in his service, and less apt to flinch at the sight of their sufferings. To use knives in the flanks of their waggon-oxen as a means of urging them forward seems to have been one of their methods when on a journey.¹

Of course we must remember the rude conditions under which he lived, where the daily slaughter or waste of life, human and animal, going on before his eyes made him less sensitive to sufferings which might appear shocking to a more civilised race not accustomed to the sight of its slaughter-houses.

It is true the Hottentot was allowed redress by the law, if he could reach it, and if he could prove his case. But how was a Hottentot herdsman on a farm of the Nieuwveld or Agter Brintjes Hoogte to lay his complaint? He had to travel perhaps a hundred or two hundred miles to reach the nearest drostdy, hiding by day in swamps or caverns, and travelling only at night in order not to be retaken and, it might be, summarily shot as a runaway. If he did reach the drostdy and state his case, he was at once sent to the

p. 250. See also the pamphlet by General Janssens' private secretary, quoted by Barrow, which gives more ferocious instances of cruelty than anything stated by Barrow himself vol. ii., p. 405.

¹ Barrow, vol. i., p. 183; Percival, p. 58.

tronk, or prison for blacks, to wait there till his master might appear, and then he was brought out to face a board of *heemraden*, who were themselves farmers, and probably shared fully the prevalent indifference and contempt of the Boer for the sufferings of a coloured race. For long his only real chance of justice in the remoter districts was if a magistrate like Honoratus Maynier happened to be landdrost, or if he could reach the missionary station at Bethelsdorp, where a man of commanding character like Dr. Vanderkemp might be able to get his case inquired into. But if cases of cruelty and oppression were frequent even under British rule and almost under the eye of the missionary,¹ what must have been the state of things when the government was weak and a missionary had never been seen beyond the Gamtoos?

It is not surprising that a race subjected to hopeless oppression for generations should exhibit marks of deep degradation, should be indolent, filthy, gluttonous, fond of brandy, dacha, or anything else that could make them forget for the time their woes and the disgrace of their condition, for this last point they felt acutely.

Yet listless and sunken as they were they had some characteristic virtues rather unusual in a degraded and savage race. There was a native mildness, an absence

¹ See the Bethelsdorp correspondence in Philip's *Researches*, vol. ii., appendices xi.—xv.

both of ferocity and cunning in their disposition. They were docile, perfectly harmless, honest and faithful ; they were even truthful as a people : " from lying and stealing," Barrow says decisively, the " Hottentot may be considered exempt."¹ So write the older authorities very generally, but later travellers, after emancipation days, do not have such a good report of their truthfulness or honesty. By that time they may have acquired with their freedom some of the vices of " mean whites."

They were not without talents ; they learned Dutch or English quickly, were expert drivers and marksmen, and no contemptible soldiers when well led. As scouts or on the spoor they were not to be excelled.

In the first volume of Thompson's *Travels* there is a very good drawing of an old Hottentot herdsman taken from the life, which is worth looking at. The melancholy eyes, the simple and rather amiable expression, the weak, relaxed mouth and generally listless, knock-kneed attitude illustrate excellently the character of the Hottentot as described by the travellers of that time. In default of the picture the reader may take Pringle's pen-portrait of the Hottentot in the following sonnet, which, as Thompson remarks, might have been written to accompany the engraving, so entirely does it coincide

¹ Vol. i. p. 151.

with the latter in the features it seizes as characteristic of the race.

Mild, melancholy, and sedate he stands,
Tending another's flocks upon the fields—
His father's once—where now the White Man builds
His home, and issues forth his proud commands;
His dark eye flashes not ; his listless hands
Support the boor's huge firelock ; but the shields
And quivers of his race are gone : he yields,
Submissively, his freedom and his lands.
Has he no courage? Once he had, but, lo !
Harsh Servitude hath worn him to the bone.
No enterprise? Alas ! the brand, the blow
Have humbled him to dust—his Hope is gone.
“ He's a base-hearted hound—not worth his food,”
His master cries ;—“ he has no *gratitude* !”

Interest in the pure Hottentot race is now mainly historical. Its place in South Africa has been taken by mixed breeds, especially the Cape-boys and Bastards, or Griquas, the latter a stronger race—the product mainly of Cape Dutchmen and Hottentot women.

The condition of the slaves and Hottentots within the Colony, then, was one of the first things to call for the attention of the British Governor after it became apparent that the Colony was to be a permanent part of the Empire. The kind of legislation evidently required at this time was that which should define the rights of these inferior races more strictly and extend to them a better protection from the laws, without too much disturbing the economic condition of the country.

But legislation of this kind was a vexation to the Boer, especially to the Boer of the remoter districts, who was accustomed to look on everything, man and beast alike, within his six miles of farm land, with the eye of an absolute lord and master. He had the strictest notions of the discipline necessary for slaves and servants of an inferior race. In his eyes they were lazy, treacherous vagabonds, whom nothing but the whip and even severer methods could keep in order. He hardly considered them of the same human race as himself. The direct testimony of all missionaries and travellers in South Africa proves that the Boers generally were decidedly hostile to the instruction of either slaves or Hottentot servants in the Christian religion. Besides their unwillingness to admit the common humanity of the coloured races, a vague notion, founded on a custom of the earliest colonists, seems to have existed amongst them, that baptized slaves and natives had a kind of legal status, and an old law of the Colony at least prohibited them being sold.

VIII

rd Caledon's Administration—Attempt to Solve the Hottentot Problem—The Operation of the Pass Law—Establishment of the Circuit Courts—Sir John Cradock's Policy—The Apprenticeship System—Expulsion of the Kaffirs from the Zuurveld.

WHEN the British took possession of the Cape for the second time, they had a better idea of the grave racial problems they had to face in that country. The first Governor was the Earl of Caledon (1807–1811). He was a young man of high character and abilities, and entered upon his task with all the boldness and energy of youth. He fitted out expeditions to explore the great tracts north of the Orange River, inhabited by the Bechuanas and other tribes, it being desirable to know what you might have one day to meet in that quarter ; he sent Colonel Collins as commissioner to investigate the condition of the Bushmen ; he induced the Moravian Brethren, whose work at Gnadenthal he highly commended, to establish another mission-station at Groenekloof, near Capetown ; and he was the first to give Capetown, in

spite of much opposition from the conservative Dutch, a good system of water-supply by means of iron pipes and pumps, and thus save the immense daily labour of the slaves employed in carrying water. But the two great measures of his administration, by which he hoped to solve the problem of the coloured races within the Colony, were the Proclamation of 1809, and the establishment of the Annual Circuit Courts in 1811.

The celebrated Proclamation of 1809 (the reader will find it in the Appendix of Bird's or of Philip's book) was intended to fix and regulate the condition of the Hottentots in the Colony. It contains some wise and benevolent provisions for the treatment of the Hottentot servant, the very necessity of which is a convincing proof, were there no other, of the oppressive servitude into which the race had fallen. The 10th Article, for example, prescribes that "the master shall in no case be allowed to detain, or prevent from departing, the wife or children of any Hottentot that has been in service, after the expiration of the term of their husband or father, under pretence of a security for what he is indebted to him." This Article, in particular, put an end to the practice which the Boers had long exercised, as if it were a legal right, of retaining Hottentot children as "apprentices" till their twenty-fifth year.¹ In another Article, the 6th, which

¹ See Pringle's *Narrative*, p. 68.

allows the customary punishment of the Hottentot if he has made "a false or wanton complaint" (*i.e.*, if he has failed to prove his case to the satisfaction of the board of heemraden), it is found necessary to make the following proviso: "This Article is not to extend to ill-treatment, *accompanied by mutilation or injury* done to any part or limb of the body, by which the complainant may be deprived of the use thereof for some time, or for ever."

Comment on the condition of a race which stood in need of such protective legislation as this is surely needless.

But the Proclamation of 1809 had also another side. The young English Governor had heard much, no doubt, about the need of cheap labour on the farms of the Boer, about the dangers of vagrant pilfering Hottentots, and about the combination of Hottentots and Kaffirs in the forays of 1801. The man whom he chiefly trusted in these matters, Colonel Collins, whom he had sent as commissioner to the Eastern Frontier, was a practical military man, with an eye for order, discipline, and the immediate usefulness of things, but somewhat limited in his insight into the larger issues of things. It appears to have been at his suggestion that Lord Caledon, who in any case was naturally anxious to satisfy, as far as he could, the Dutch farmers, inserted three Articles into his Proclamation, the 1st, 15th, and 16th, any one of which was sufficient

as administered by Dutch landdrosts, heemraden, and field-cornets, to rivet the chains of the Hottentots even more firmly than before. The three together constituted the strictest form of a vagrancy law that could be framed. The Hottentot was required to have a fixed and registered place of abode which he could not leave for another district without the permit of the fiscal or landdrost ; he was not allowed to enter any service without a certificate from the landdrost or field-cornet, or his previous master ; he could not, even in the service of his master, go about the country without a pass, which any one was entitled to ask him for, and arrest him if he could not produce it. The penalty for failure to comply with these regulations was "being considered and treated as vagabonds," that is, being put into the *tronk*, until he accepted service with a farmer, usually the one who arrested him.

The practical result of the Proclamation was to put the Hottentot completely at the mercy of the Boer, heemraden, and field-cornets. It condemned a man who had no land, nor opportunity of acquiring land, to a "fixed place of abode."¹

With the best of intentions the young Governor had enacted one of the subtlest devices ever fallen upon

¹ The whole of the land held in the colony by Hottentots on legal rights (five or six privileged persons), did not exceed 200 acres. See Philip, vol. ii., p. 250.

for enslaving a people in the circumstances of the Hottentots, the Pass Law. When a Hottentot's term of service with a farmer expired, what was he to do? Procure a pass; whither? he had no "fixed abode" except his master's farm. The pass was usually given, therefore, to the nearest field-cornet or landdrost, who might impress him to serve as a soldier, or turn him on to some public work at a cheap rate, or order him to find a new master within a day. For a Hottentot with a wife and family the case was hopeless; he could only leave one service for another, with masters who knew he was absolutely in their power. If a Hottentot not in service with the Boers lost his pass, or had it forcibly taken from him, which might easily happen, he was dragged before a field-cornet and compelled to enter the service of the person who had seized him.¹ His only real shelter was the mission station; ² there he was sure of good treatment and, if he was hired out, of fair remuneration for his labour; or he might be allowed a piece of land to cultivate for himself and his family.

Lord Caledon had done his best in a difficult matter, and no doubt official circles in Capetown and the well-bred loungers at the Club House in the

¹ See Philip, *Researches*, vol. i., p. 168-171.

² See Van Rhyneveld's "Report on the Condition of the Hottentots in 1801," *Records*, 1801-3, p. 90. This Report served as the basis of Lord Caledon's Proclamation.

Heeregragt congratulated him on having scored a great success, and solved the double problem of giving the Hottentots the legal protection they stood in need of, and also meeting the demands of the Boers for cheap labour.

Perhaps Lord Caledon's enactment, administered with mildness and justice, as it would be in the districts near Capetown, was no bad solution of the difficulty. But the administration of such a law in the districts about Capetown, almost under the eyes of the Governor and the South African Society, was one thing, and its working in the remote districts of Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage quite another. There it was administered by local magistrates, who were themselves, except at the drostdies, grazier-boers, with all the contempt and prejudice of that race for the Hottentot, and far from any immediate supervision or control. It was there also, in these eastern districts, that two-thirds of the whole Hottentot race in the Colony lived. In Barrow's time the average number of Hottentot servants on a Graaff-Reinet farm was thirteen.

Here also Lord Caledon did his best to meet the difficulty. During a tour which he made to the eastern frontier he was painfully impressed by the fact that the Hottentots who came to state their cases to him, came at night, in terror, says Bird, lest they should be seen by their masters. He seems then to

have realised more clearly the chance which the protective side of his Proclamation of 1809 had of being carried into effect in the remote frontier districts where the vast majority of the Hottentots were employed. Accordingly, in 1811, he issued another Proclamation, which was perhaps his greatest legacy to the Colony. By it he established annual Circuit Courts through the distant drostdies for the purpose of trying important cases and reviewing the acts of the landdrosts and other officials. There were special provisions also for affording Hottentots, and slaves at a distance from the drostdy, an opportunity of making their complaints.

Of this last measure Wilberforce Bird, who reflected a sort of moderate liberal and official opinion at the Cape, says, "it checked the hitherto unrestrained violence of the Boers, which before that time passed unnoticed for a long period, and often remained wholly unpunished." No doubt it did some good, yet the tendency of the local officials to connive at and conceal the misdemeanours of their countrymen was so great, that some years afterwards the Commissioners appointed to report on the government of the Cape, as quoted by Pringle, declared that in many districts the protective clauses of Lord Caledon's Proclamation had become almost a dead letter.¹

¹ Pringle's *Narrative*, p. 255 ; *Report on Government of the Cape*, pp. 9-19.

The merit of Lord Caledon's work has been obscured both by Theal and Philip. The first separates and disperses the facts in his usual way, so that the reader gets no clear view of the British Governor's magnanimous efforts to do justice and meet the conflicting needs of both the races, white and black, under his rule ;¹ while Philip is so taken up with the oppressive operation of the Pass Law that he almost overlooks the other side of Lord Caledon's legislation.

The British authorities were certainly doing their best with a difficult problem. Everything depended, first, on the nice adjustment of the law for two almost opposite ends, to protect the Hottentot from oppression and yet force him into the service of the Boer, and secondly, on the impartiality with which the local magistrates, mostly Boers themselves, administered the law for both of those ends. Perhaps the two ends were incompatible in the circumstances of the country at that time, and the British authorities, in their attempts to do their best for the Boer graziers, were going perilously near the reduction of the Hottentot race to a legal condition of slavery.

This was decidedly the case when Sir John

¹ See Theal's *History of South Africa*, Chap. xxxi., pp. 140-166, and Chap. xxxv., p. 340, and understand his methods once for all.

Cradock, who succeeded Lord Caledon as Governor in 1811, issued his Proclamation of 1812, which restored the old Dutch system of the enforced "apprenticeship" of Hottentot children born on the farms of the Boers. The fourth Article of this proclamation reads thus :

When such children as are born in the service of the farmers or inhabitants, have attained the age of eight years, and have been maintained by such farmers or inhabitants during that period, the landdrost of the district shall apprentice such Hottentots, male or female, to the farmer or inhabitant by whom they have been so maintained, in case he be willing to receive such apprentice, for ten years, provided that the person to whom the Hottentot is to be bound, is a person of humanity, and one upon whom strict reliance for the good treatment of the apprentice may be placed ; and in case the person who has maintained the Hottentot for the period of eight years aforesaid, shall not be willing to take such Hottentot as an apprentice for the term of ten years, or that the person in question be not such upon whose humanity or circumstances the landdrost can place reliance for the good treatment of the Hottentot, *then the landdrost is hereby authorised to bind such Hottentot unto such other humane person within his district as he shall think fit, for the period aforesaid.*

Dr. Theal, who indexes mere rumours and views of his own, as if they were matters of fact, does not make the slightest reference to this important alteration in the status of the Hottentot in his account of Sir John Cradock's administration in Chapter xxxi. of his history. But four chapters later, in his account of General Bourke's administration sixteen years

afterwards, he refers to it casually, and avers that "it had more effect in raising these people (the Hottentots) towards civilisation than any other regulation ever made concerning them."

It does seem very probable that Sir John's measure had some good effects in the way of disciplining the Hottentots, but on the other hand Pringle, Philip, Read and others, who knew the condition of the Hottentots of that period better than any one of our time can know it, are very doubtful of its good effects and very sure of its evils. These authorities point out that it either kept whole families in enforced service to protect their families, or that it separated parents from their children and left young Hottentot females to grow up unguarded amongst the slaves and herdsmen.¹

The safeguards, too, for the just administration of this law were often of little use. The official correspondence between the Bethelsdorp mission and the landdrost of Uitenhage shows clearly that two Hottentot girls about twenty-four years of age, who had taken refuge there, were claimed by a farmer as respectively eleven and twelve. The missionary, Mr. Read, accordingly protested, and Landdrost Cuyler, on investigation, admitted the facts, but rewarded Mr. Read for his exposure of the imposition by an official note forbidding him to "receive any Hottentots of

¹ Philip, *Researches*, vol. i. p. 183.

whatever description" at his institution without a written permission from himself.¹ The landdrost—he was an officer in the British army—had thus taken away the right of asylum from Bethelsdorp.

One result, I think, of Sir John's Proclamation must have been to increase any disinclination the married Hottentot might have for the service of the Boers, at any rate of all but those of the best reputation for kindly treatment of their servants; it must have helped to fill the missionary stations where the Hottentot could at least leave his family if he himself went into service. In this way it helped to make the conflict between the missionaries and the Boers more acute, for it added a new class of disputes over apprenticed children to those which already existed.

It placed very great power also in the hands of the landdrost, practically the patronage of all Hottentot labour, and it inevitably drew the British Governor and his British officials into an antagonistic attitude towards the missions for Hottentots, an attitude which often developed, as in the case of Landdrost Cuyler and the Bethelsdorp mission, into as bitter a conflict as that which existed between the missionaries and the Boers.

Sir John Cradock was not an inhumane man, and,

¹ See this and other cases of like nature in Philip's *Researches*, Appendix, p. 425.

had he never left England, might have sat on the committee of the African Institution or the British and Foreign Bible Society, but his letter of February 10th, 1814, to the Rev. John Campbell, then visiting Africa as Deputy from the London Missionary Society, shows conclusively, under its official tone of moderation and politeness, that he had taken a decided line against the extension of missions in the Colony.

You are well aware [he writes] that the disinclination to increase, or even to maintain the institutions already established in this colony, is almost universal ; and that the general alarm and outcry is, that if they are permitted to enlarge or disseminate, the most fatal injury will ensue to the agriculture and sustenance of the community. All this must be admitted by every reasonable man : if idleness is allowed to prevail, or if the labours in the field, at the proper season of the year, are not cheerfully accorded to all the surrounding farmers, to ensure industry in general and more extensive usefulness, it would seem very injudicious to allot any considerable portion of land to these institutions, that would render them independent of connection with their neighbours, and allow them to look upon all around them with indifference.¹

That paragraph expresses plainly enough what the policy of the British authorities had been for some years, and what it continued to be for many years more. The existence of slave-labour in any form, however mitigated, will always raise the same problem and the same cry.

¹ See Cradock's letter in Philip's *Researches*, Appendix No. iv.

Of course, Sir John's legislation was popular with the Boers. It gave them the cheapest class of labour, and it often kept a whole Hottentot family permanently in the service of a farmer in order not to leave their children behind them.

On the Kaffir frontier also the policy of the British Governors was designed to meet, as far as possible, the views of the Boers. The Zuurveld in that region had long been a kind of "Debateable Land." In Barrow's time the name was occasionally given to the country along the coast between the Sunday and the Fish Rivers, but later it was more strictly reserved for the part between the Bushman's and the Fish River. The colonists claimed it as part of the colony since Pettenberg's time, and especially since Lord Macartney's arrangement with the Kaffir chief Gaika. But the native chiefs in the Zuurveld contested the claim on various counts, and even, as Dr. Vanderkemp tells us, claimed the land as far as the Sunday River, as Kaffir territory.¹ It was in many parts a fertile and beautiful country, well watered and rich in woods and pasture, and was occupied by the Gunukwebes, a tribe of mixed blood, partly representing the old Hottentot clan which had held this region in the days of Van Riebeek. Ndlambe's tribe also, and other Kaffir tribes, who were mostly at enmity with the

¹ See *Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 10, p. 193.

Gaika, or refused to acknowledge his authority, lived in the district.

In Chapter VI. I have already related the complete failure of the commando led by Tjaart van der Walt in 1803 against the Zuurveld Kaffirs, and the acceptance by the Boers of the *status quo ante*. During the period of the restored Dutch rule (1803-1806) no further expedition was attempted against them, and the Kaffirs considered that their claims had been made good alike by war and in equity.¹

The British authorities, however, on their re-occupation of the Colony, undertook the task of expelling the Kaffirs from the Zuurveld. In 1811 Sir John Cradock, then newly arrived, assembled a great force of burghers and troops under the command of Colonel Graham, about 800 of the former and 1,200 of the latter, and drove the various Kaffir tribes, Cungwa's clan (the Gunukwebes), Ndlambe's clan, Tshatshu's clan, and other petty sections of the Kosa race, about 20,000 in all, across the Fish River, destroying their kraals and their garden produce, which was just then in the blade. Some of them were mere refugees in the Zuurveld, but others had been there for generations, and some were descendants of Ghonaquas, who had fed their flocks and

¹ See the remarkable speech of the Kaffir councillor, from Stockenström's notes, in Pringle's *Narrative*, pp. 303-5.

hunted the buffalo on the banks of the Sunday River long before a Dutch Boer had trekked beyond the Breede.

Dr. Theal may try hard to obscure the fact, but the British Governors of this period were evidently doing much work for the Boers besides that of instructing and civilizing them.¹

¹ Compare the account of these events in the Zuurveld given by Brownlee (see Thompson's Appendix) and Pringle, p. 290, both almost contemporary with the events and on the spot, with that of Theal, Chap. xxxi., p. 153.

IX

The Missionary Societies in South Africa—The Moravian Brethren—The London Missionary Society—Dr. Vanderkemp.

BETWEEN the British official of this period, whether Governor, military officer on the frontier, or provincial magistrate, and the ordinary Boer there was considerable sympathy, and much that was common in their way of regarding the subject races. Both were aristocrats in their different ways ; both were hunters and men of war ; both had very decided notions as to the methods by which an inferior black race was to be governed and disciplined ; and both, in general, had much the same contempt for philanthropic theories—ideals which serve no immediate purpose, and generally for all that train of Christian virtues, the exaltation of humility and patience, the charity that hopeth all things, which Nietzsche declares to be the natural creed of the “serf race.” Perhaps the chief difference was that the British aristocrat

being of gentler birth and training had a decided aversion to anything like personal ill-treatment of the native.

Both were also great professors of Christianity, in their fashion, the Englishman in a decent official way, and the Boers in the spirit of a chosen people, to whom all things were lawful, especially the spoiling of the heathen. An armed party of Boers who went out to shoot down, quite on general principles, a few Bushmen on the frontier, would sing three of Willem Sluiter's hymns, and take a glass of brandy before starting. But the Boers had not forgotten, as Mr. Bryce suggests ("there is neither bond nor free.") Galatians iii. 28. They had it very well in their minds as an excellent reason for prohibiting the baptism of slaves and refusing to acknowledge the communion of Hottentots and Kaffirs. "Hottentot Predikant," their name for the missionary, was with them a term of supreme contempt.

In short, the principles of Christianity and the doctrine of the survival of the fittest were in very open conflict in South Africa, as the latter was operated by the British official and the Boer. Nor do I think, in the case of the latter at least, that this policy was accompanied, or justified, by any views or hopes that in this way the ultimate civilisation of the native races was to be achieved. To the ordinary Boer the native was no better than the ox of the field, to be freely

used up in his service, and the British Governor was at most a kind of member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

This tyrannous instinct is by no means peculiar to the Boer, but is that of all dominant races whenever the laws give it a chance of growth. Nothing is more striking than the change of sentiment experienced by many of the British immigrants, good Scotch Presbyterians and English Methodists, who came out to Cape Colony in 1820, overflowing with indignation at the treatment they heard the natives received from the Dutch farmers ; but after they had been a year or two there, not a few of them were as eager as the Boers to subject cheap Hottentot labour to their commands.¹

But the policy of establishing legal servitude for the native races could never obtain any full or systematic development in South Africa under British rule. It was checked and modified from the beginning by the well-known opinion of the British public at home in such matters, and it found a resolute and persistent opponent in the British missionary.

It was in connection with this question of protective legislation for slaves and natives, that the British missionary began to make himself felt as a political

¹ See Pringle's *Narrative* ; and the wages account filed by Alexander Biggar against his Hottentot servant in Philip's, Appendix, p. 440.

force in South Africa. The value of his work was at one time the subject of fierce disputes in the Colony, the memory of which still lives amongst the Transvaal Boers, and in the somewhat vindictive representation which is given of his work in Dr. Theal's *History of South Africa*. If Dr. Theal's histories were deficient in nothing else, they would still be grossly deficient in this, that they almost ignore the part the missionary has played in the development of South Africa, except occasionally to depreciate it. At times, indeed, he gives a bare enumeration of mission stations, or casually notes the territory of some Kaffir tribe as a field of missionary labours, but there is no attempt at any general appreciation of the missionary's work and influence in South Africa. Yet it may be said with truth that in no other part of the modern world has the missionary had so great a share in moulding the destinies of half a continent, and determining the character of its civilisation.

The British missionary, in particular, who was the agent of powerful societies at home, and whose periodical letters and reports were published in magazines possessing a wide circulation in religious and philanthropic circles, had much to do with the formation of public opinion in Great Britain in regard to the affairs of Cape Colony. He was the "special correspondent" of that period, the explorer, war-critic, economic observer and reporter of "atrocities"

at a time when such reporting had not yet become part of ordinary journalistic enterprise; and his influence was all the greater that the vote of the religious or evangelical section of the middle classes, whom he chiefly represented, was then a more potent factor in politics than it is now. It is not too much to say that the policy which has made South Africa outside of the Transvaal what it is to-day, which gave the Hottentot and the Kaffir a fair chance in the country of their birth alongside of the white man, whether as a free citizen of Cape Colony, or as a member of a protected native state, was largely the work of the British missionary.

During the earlier period of British rule, till about 1820, two great missionary societies, the Moravian Brethren and the London Missionary Society, had the field almost to themselves. The difference between the two societies in their work and methods was marked in this early period, and seems to have led the German traveller, Lichtenstein, and Dr. Theal following him, into somewhat unfair comparisons. The Moravians, till 1818, had only two great stations in the colony, one at Genadenthal and the other at Groenekloof. Both were comparatively near Capetown, the latter only forty miles north, and were composed partly of the better class of half-breeds, who had been all their lives in contact with civilisation, and who found ready employment and perfect

security for their property in those peaceful districts. The number of resident missionaries at the Moravian stations was unusually large, six, for example, at Genadenthal and four at Groenekloof; the whole with wives and families must rather have resembled the staff of a small college than a missionary outpost. But this contributed much to the order and discipline as well as to the material comfort of the settlement. Except in seasons of blight, therefore, both the Moravian settlements usually exhibited a high degree of prosperity. The Moravian Brethren themselves were plain, sensible men, "sound enough in the faith," reports one deputation, "but perhaps without that heightened enthusiasm which urged men like Read and Moffat to carry the Gospel into the wilderness amongst remote and savage tribes. Gleaning carefully amongst the missionary magazines we can see that there were some zealous persons who thought the spiritual tone of the Moravian settlements slightly defective; exposition of doctrine, and even prayer, too infrequent, singing of hymns being used instead at openings and closings; it was even reported by severe critics, perhaps of Scotch nationality, that the Sabbath was not regarded as more sacred than any other day amongst them. Solid, realistic Teutons, the Moravian Brethren evidently were, and not likely to spend their time, like St. Francis, in preaching to the fishes, but most

estimable in their practical methods, and with something of the scientific German in their discipline and precise regulations. Most of them were plain mechanics brought up to a trade. The material prosperity, in general, of their settlements was admitted on all hands." "As to externals," one deputation significantly reports, "there is every prospect of prosperity." (See *Missionary Register* for the years 1818, 1820, 1830.) Being a foreign mission and without any strong connections in England, the Moravian Society had no political influence;¹ indeed, till 1818, it had no station near enough the frontier to bring it into contact with the peculiar problems of that region.

The spirit of the London Missionary Society² was as exalted and venturous as that of the United Brethren was cautious and realistic. Its first missionaries, Mr. Kicherer and Dr. Vanderkemp, on their arrival in 1799, selected the most distant and wildest parts of the frontier as the field of their labours, and in 1818, before the Wesleyans had yet established their great line of mission stations in Kaffirland, and while the Moravians had only just

¹ It had, however, an auxiliary London branch, and drew about two-thirds of its funds from Great Britain. See *Missionary Register*, 1822, p. 203.

² Established in 1795 as "The Missionary Society," but known, after the rise of other societies, as "The London Missionary Society," a name which it formally adopted in 1818.

ventured on a new station in Uitenhage, the London Society, besides its seven stations within the Colony, had already six stations amongst the tribes beyond its boundaries, one of them at Africaner's Kraal under the celebrated Robert Moffat, then young and unknown ; another as far north as Lattakoo, near Kuruman, under Robert Hamilton. In its zeal to add new fields to those already under cultivation, the London Society never kept more than two white missionaries at most at a station, and on one occasion, when circumstances had detained some of the brethren at the Bethelsdorp mission, Mr. Read, Pringle's "fervent Read," who was in charge there, wrote of it as a calamity. "We are now seven together ; which is painful, considering the thousands of heathen who want help."

This distinction of character between the two societies was evidently not unknown to Missionary Directors and Evangelical editors at home, but their view of it was very different from Dr. Theal's. The Church Magazines of these days occasionally distinguish, I observe, between what they call "missionary talent" and something for which their esteem is even higher, "missionary gifts and graces," the "missionary soul," sometimes they call it. And though neither of the two Societies certainly was wanting in either direction, yet it is evident, at this early period at least, each was superior in its own line. The London

Society missionaries were especially active in extending the sphere of missionary work. Their motto was the verse of Zechariah, often found heading some missionary exhortation in the religious magazines: "Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubabel? Thou shalt become a plain."

They seem to have resolved to carry the word of the Lord to all the heathen races in South Africa, not only those within the Colony, but also those living beyond its borders, the slaves of Capetown, the Hottentots of Graaff-Reinet, the Namaquas, the Wild Bushmen of the Zak River and the Garieep, the Corannas and Griquas on the Orange River, the Bechuanas of the far North, as it was then, and the wild tribes of Kaffirland. Amongst every one of these a missionary of the London Society was to be found, toiling in the midst of the native settlement he had formed around him, teaching them to plant gardens and live in some decency, as well as to sing hymns and hear "the great word," as they called it.

There were weak brethren, of course, even amongst those pioneer missionaries, men whose heart failed them when they looked on the bold eyes of a Kaffir chief or a Griqua captain; there were cautious gentlemen amongst them too, who instead of setting up their tent in the wilderness, accepted snug state livings, and passed the rest of their lives in candid criticism of their bolder brethren's zeal on behalf of

the natives ; there was even a Seidenfaden amongst them. But in general this early race of missionaries were most fearlessly devoted to their work, and had a sublime faith in it, quite apart from its merely economic results, which was characteristic of that generation.

From their numerous connections at home the London Society's missionaries were particularly successful in exciting the interest of religious circles there in the South African missions. Mr. Kicherer, who had gone to the northern frontier of the Colony at the Zak River, and been fairly successful amongst the half-breed Hottentots, and to a less extent also amongst the Bushmen there, brought three of his converts over with him to London in 1803. The Hottentots, John, Mary, and Martha, appeared at Surrey Chapel and other places, were catechized by the Rev. Rowland Hill before the whole congregation, with certainly very satisfactory results,¹ and sang their Dutch hymns, which seem so marvellously fitted in language and verse alike for the utterance of a simple people :

't Geloof bemint Him, en beschowt
 Zijn mart'ling, dood en pijn ;
 De zaak wordt ons nooit oud noch koud,
 Tot dat wij bij Him zijn.

¹ *Rev. Rowland Hill* (rather subtly) : What quantity of good works is sufficient to merit Heaven ?

Hottentot Mary (not falling into the snare) : By nature we

Naturally the African converts excited much interest in religious circles. "Africa's tawny race singing the praises of our common Lord," remarks the great *Evangelical Magazine*, and gives a finished engraving, probably by Bartalozzi, of Mr. Kicherer and his three Hottentots as a frontispiece in the volume of 1804.

There was a good deal of the Heidelberg and Shorter Catechisms in it all, but the main fact is clear that these poor creatures had arrived at the idea that the world was not to be altogether the spoil of the unscrupulous oppressor and the adept liar, as they once must have thought it was, but that the people of Surrey Chapel meant to make it different, and being themselves of a weak and oppressed race they were sincerely grateful.

It is no doubt true that, turn these poor Hottentots into a second generation of free and unoppressed Cape-boys, and they are not at all so likely to show the same Christian humility and profound gratitude to the preacher and the missionary, or to know as much about doctrine as did John and Martha from the Zak River, but rather to be very much taken up with their own success in the world and their marvellous dexterity in driving an ox-team. What the

can do no good work ; and when we by Spirit do good work, then we no think to merit Heaven thereby . . . but through merit of Christ.

Rev. Rowland Hill called "the fear of God" seems to be more connected in the history of peoples with their epochs of national struggle and anxiety, than with their times of opulence and security. There is a Nietzschean Ascent of Man in these things which is seen in nations that are as high in the scale of civilisation as the Hottentots are low. Look at the New Americanism which is emerging quick-brained and ignorant of the past into the golden freedom of ward-politics and the publicity of *Life* and some New York journals. Its fathers were Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Emerson and Longfellow, but it does not seem as if it knew any longer how to respect them. To it Emerson's George Minot is no better than a "Hayseed," and Emerson himself writes no English it can understand. It was only the other day that *Life* was informing its readers that Longfellow, Emerson, Hawthorne, and that coterie were no better than the rest of us, and that "they took themselves seriously," and managed to impose on the public accordingly ; and many of the magazine articles written by literary personages are hinting the same thing now-a-days in a more roundabout manner.—No better than the rest of us, with our hastily formed judgments, our moral cowardice before the Boss and the back streets, and our pens at the service of anything that will pay us !

Life is certainly one of the cleverest schools of

caricature in the world, but its knowledge of history is of the kind you get in the Chatauqua series and the encyclopædias, and it is just a little afraid of the back-streets of Cracow and New York, perhaps a little mixed up with them. I am expecting every day to hear from it that Washington and Emerson were very "un-American," Krapulinski and Waschlapski will be delighted at the news, and fall into each other's arms, and conclude that a universal era of Bologna sausages and one wash a year is near at hand.

. zwei edle Polen,
Polen aus der Polackei.

Mr. Kicherer did not speak enthusiastically of the Dutch farmers in the Zak River district, or of the encouragement they give him. They were "indifferent or inimical" (*Evang. Mag.*, vol. 9, page 289), and it is related that Martha's mistress beat and ill treated her because she wished to obtain religious instruction. "Religion," she said, "was not for Hottentots." At this time, indeed, the Dutch farmers generally looked on attempts to convert or teach Hottentots with contempt, and the abject condition of that race, every sentiment of delicacy or self-respect crushed out of them by masters who regarded them as little better than mere animals, might have seemed to justify the Dutch Boer's opinion.

But the leading spirit and the most prominent men

amongst the London Society's missionaries of this early period was Dr. Vanderkemp. His work in particular gave a character to the London Missionary Society as the special defender of the rights of the natives in South Africa, which it never afterwards lost. Vanderkemp was a man of extensive learning, and had had a varied experience of life. He was a Dutchman by birth,¹ and had studied medicine at Leyden. Later on, after having spent some years in the army, where he became Captain of Horse, he completed his medical studies at Edinburgh, where he wrote his *Parmenides*, a Latin treatise on cosmology. Returning to Holland he practised as a physician for ten years, till the death of his wife and child at the same moment by drowning, gave a new turn to his mind and his studies. Up to that time he had been a pupil of Bayle and the great French Encyclopædists, regarding Christianity as "inconsistent with the dictates of reason," but now he retired from his practice as a physician, and being a man of means, gave himself to Oriental and Biblical studies. He was busy with a commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, when he happened to read one of the London Missionary Society's sermons, and felt called to devote himself to the redemption of the

¹ The London Missionary Society was in the habit of sending out its missionaries in South Africa in couples, choosing one Dutch and one English.

heathen.¹ It was a curious but not unnatural revulsion from the high barren exegesis of Bayle and Volney, which indeed was getting out of date now that Herder and Schiller, not to speak of Chateaubriand, had arisen with a better knowledge of the past and its meaning. But Dr. Theal suggests his mind must have been affected. Vanderkemp offered his services to the London Society, by whom they were readily accepted, and in 1798 he sailed for the Cape of Good Hope, giving up, as Robert Moffat says, "a life of earthly honours and ease to encounter the perils of a pioneer missionary amongst savage tribes."

The first field he tried was in Kaffirland, where he and his partner, Mr. Edmonds, found a welcome from Gaika, the great Kaffir chief, then settled at the head waters of the Tyumie. This shrewd and profoundly politic barbarian, as one missionary describes him, was quick to perceive the political advantages of a resident missionary, and gave orders that Vanderkemp and his partner should be accommodated as well as possible at his kraal. But the very superiority of the Kaffir, proud of his race and his traditions and with a strong tribal system of laws and usages, made him more difficult to convert than the weaker and more susceptible Hottentot. Vanderkemp reports that he had no

¹ See account of his life in *Evangelical Magazine*, vol. ii. pp. 349 and 396.

success amongst them generally. Only of Gaika himself he had some hope; "it appears to me the Lord pleads with him," he wrote to the brethren at home.

But the Doctor was not altogether without hearers or converts. It was at Gaika's kraal that the rebellious Boers who had fled from the Colony after Van Jaarsveld's rebellion were living, Piet Prinsloo Jan Botha, Frans Kruger, Bezuidenhout, Buys, and others. Dr. Vanderkemp does not speak in high terms of their piety, rather otherwise indeed, but some of them, especially Piet Prinsloo, occasionally attended his religious services. Once, Dr. Vanderkemp, having spoken from John iii, verses 1-16, Piet Prinsloo seemed much affected and spoke himself, the Doctor says, "as it seemed, out of a broken heart. He confessed that he had suspected us to be spies, and represented us as such to Gaika and thereby endangered our lives; but denied that he had been concerned in the scheme of murdering us directly" (*Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 9, page 488). "Not directly," Piet declares, much affected by the words of the teacher come from God. Frans Kruger and Bezuidenhout with their families also came occasionally to worship, not more than indirectly concerned either, one would hope, in that murderous project. It is a strange but quite historical type of Christianity. Vanderkemp's real congregation, however, consisted

of a few Hottentot women and children who were in the service of the refugees. Thirty years after, one of these Hottentot women, who had always preserved a grateful memory of Dr. Vanderkemp, came to visit Stephen Kay on the establishment of the Wesleyan Mission at Butterworth, and gave him a curious account of the *Christen Mensche*, the Boers, that is, and their unchristian ways at Gaika's kraal. (See Kay's *Travels and Researches in Kaffraria*, page 280.)

When matters grew hot between the Cape Colony and the Zuurveld Kaffirs, and the raid took place which I have already mentioned, Gaika's warriors became restless and their attitude at times threatening to the white men at the kraal. Gaika's authority, however, proved sufficient to protect them. Only Jan Botha attempting, against Gaika's advice, to return to the Colony was slain by Ndlambe's men. The following account of it from Vanderkemp's journal will give the reader an idea of what life at the kraals was in times of excitement and suspicion.

Feb. 12, 1800. This day John Botha, being determined to return to the colony with his family, proposed this to Gaika, who was very reluctant to grant him his request; afterwards, however, he gave him leave to go, and gave him a Caffre to conduct him safe through the country. He departed this very day with his wife, the wife and child of Francis Kruger (who was absent himself on shooting elephants), and Hans Knoetse.

Feb. 13. Some Caffres, sent out by Ndlambe, overtook J. Botha and ordered him to return with his waggons to Gaika; upon which he returned. When they came to Gaika's old

kraal, where we first met with him, they ordered John Botha to stop there that night, and to unyoke the oxen, which he accordingly did ; a Caffre then desired him to lend him his knife ; and when he had given it some Caffres started up from behind the bushes and threw their assegais at him : the first pierced his side, and was drawn out by his wife, who supported him in her arms ; the second he pulled out himself, and Mrs. Botha continued the rest, which the Caffres ran through his body till he sunk down and expired ; the waggon was plundered and burnt, and his cattle brought to Gaika, who disapproved the fact, and said he had only advertised Ndlambe of Botha's going out of the country, and left it to his choice to let him go, or bring him back ; Hans Knoetse had made his escape, being previously warned by the Caffres that they were going to kill somebody, and that he therefore should take care for himself.

That was the end of poor Jan Botha, one of the leaders in the Graaff-Reinet conspiracy of 1799, with his foolish Kaffir intrigues and "renewal of the old patriotism." Gaika appreciated the advantage of half-a-dozen good musket shots in his kraal, but neither Kaffir nor Boer ever really trusted each other.

Finding the Kaffirs an unprofitable field, Dr. Vanderkemp returned to the Colony, settling for a time at Graaff-Reinet with Mr. Read and Mr. Vanderlingen, who had come out to assist him. The Graaff-Reineters asked him to be their parson, but he thought his duty as a missionary required him to devote himself to the natives. He therefore selected as his special field the Hottentots in that district, while Brother Read laboured "with visible blessing" amongst the English soldiers there, and Vanderlingen

among the Dutch. "Commissioner Maynier," he writes, "favours our labours, and shows us every politeness. He has opened to us the public church for the use of the Hottentots." This last, it seems, was a great grievance to the Boers. Ultimately, however, Dr. Vanderkemp settled with Mr. Read at Bethelsdorp, near Algoa Bay, in May 1803, where he collected under his care some hundreds of Hottentots. The Colony had just then passed once more under Dutch rule, and he complains bitterly of the great opposition he met with from the Boers of Graaff-Reinet, "nominal Christians" he calls them and "most barbarous inhabitants." They hated, he says, the extension of Christianity to natives, ill-treated his Hottentot assistants, and clamoured for the suppression of the mission. But the philanthropic Janssens, as he calls the Dutch Governor, supported him. Dr. Theal gives a very unfavourable and almost ludicrous account of the Bethelsdorp mission on the occasion of the Dutch Commissioner's visit to it shortly after its establishment. Mr. De Mist and his party, he says, "found no indication of industry of any kind, no garden—though it was then the planting season—nothing but a number of wretched huts on a bare plain, with people lying about in filth and ignorance." Dr. Theal knows of course that not much could be expected of savages from the frontier who had only recently been brought together, and to whom every-

thing that belongs to civilisation was yet new and strange, but he suggests that the unfavourable impression De Mist received must have been caused by "the absence of any effort to induce the Hottentots to adopt industrious habits, and the profession of principles that tended to degrade one race without raising the other. The missionaries themselves were living in the same manner as the Hottentots and were so much occupied with teaching religious truths that they entirely neglected temporal matters." (*History*, chap. xxx. p. 90).

Dr. Theal even suggests that Dr. Vanderkemp's mind might have been unhinged by a previous domestic bereavement, partly because in pursuance of his theory of being a companion as well as teacher to his pupils he had discarded some articles of European apparel, and went about without hat, or necktie, or socks, in a remote and savage district.

Dr. Theal's representation of Vanderkemp is based chiefly on the account given of him by Lichtenstein (*Travels in Southern Africa*), a German who accompanied the Commissary-General De Mist on a tour through the Colony during the restored Dutch rule. He had something of an anti-English bias, as was natural, and had as little sympathy with the exalted enthusiasm of Vanderkemp as might be expected of one of the *Illuminati* of that period. Yet even in his account there are traits, altogether omitted

by Dr. Theal, by which one can clearly discern the commanding character of the apostle to the Hottentots. Let the reader judge the following from Lichtenstein himself :—

On the day of our arrival at Algoa Bay the Commissary-General received a visit from Vanderkemp. In the very hottest part of the morning we saw a waggon, such as is used in husbandry, drawn by four meagre oxen, coming slowly along the sandy downs. Vanderkemp sat upon a plank laid across it, without a hat, his venerable bald head exposed to the burning rays of the sun. He was dressed in a threadbare black coat, waistcoat and breeches, without shirt, neckcloth, or stockings, and leather sandals bound upon his feet, the same as are worn by the Hottentots.

The Commissary-General hastened to meet and receive him with the utmost kindness ;¹ he descended from his car, and approached with slow and measured steps, presenting to our view a tall, meagre, yet venerable figure. In his serene countenance might be traced remains of former beauty ; and in his eye, still full of fire, were plainly to be discerned the powers of mind which had distinguished his early years. Instead of the usual salutations, he uttered a short prayer, in which he begged a blessing upon our chief and his company, and the protection of heaven during the remainder of our journey. He then accompanied us into the house, when he entered into conversation freely upon many subjects, without any superciliousness or affected solemnity.

Lichtenstein gives a poor report of the Bethelsdorp Mission, “ forty or fifty wretched huts . . . upon a naked plain,” with lean, ragged, indolent Hottentots

¹ They had known each other many years before, when De Mist was a law student at Leyden and Vanderkemp a wild young lieutenant of dragoons.

lying about them. Vanderkemp he describes as a man of learning, but "a mere enthusiast, and too much absorbed in the idea of conversion" to make a good missionary.

Now, there may be some reason to criticise Dr. Vanderkemp's management of practical affairs. His method of dispensing in some degree with European conventions and discipline in order to reclaim savages may be doubtful. Discipline is probably better for them than familiarity. Perhaps, too, his digest of Scripture history from the creation downwards to illustrate cardinal points in Christian doctrine was too systematic for Hottentots, although it was no doubt, as he remarks, more suitable than "a scientific system of divinity." He had not a few of those qualities which the economist will always criticise as eccentricities of the enthusiast and the zealot. But in general matters I have noticed that his judgment was shrewd and sensible. It was not his fault that the site chosen for Bethelsdorp was a sterile soil with a scanty supply of water. It was the location assigned to him during the restored Dutch rule in 1803, and chosen by a committee of Boers who were not too friendly to his aims. This unsuitable location hampered him sadly from the beginning, but though he and Mr. Read made repeated attempts, they never succeeded in getting a better.

But with all the eccentricities which a man of

powerful and original character may present to the common eye, it is certain that there was something in his spirit and manners which fitted him to be a successful pioneer amongst those wild men, and made the way easier for those who followed him. For years after his death the name of "Jankanna," as the Kaffirs called him, was a loving memory amongst the natives, and was evidently felt by missionaries of all denominations, between the Gamtoos and the Kei at least, to be a tower of strength to them. To the Kaffir they were all alike "Jankanna's children," and to be received with perfect confidence even in times of suspicion. Gaika said of him, "He (Gaika) could always be free with him; and that, even if he sat close to him with his bedaubed skin, he had never said (or looked?), 'Get away with your nasty caross.'" (*Missionary Register*, 1816, p. 477.) Similar testimony to his manners is given by the Kaffir captain, who visited missionary Kayser at the Buffalo River in 1830, and told him that Dr. Vanderkemp "never refused the Kaffir captains anything [*tobacco and the like*], and even invited them to eat with him at the table; whereas at this station the captains must sit down with the common Kaffirs, and if they get something to eat it is given them apart" (*Evangelical Magazine*, 1832, p. 455). It is no great testimonial certainly, but the black mouths were evidently not affluent in the language of testimonials.

But though mild in his manner to the natives, he was very firm, almost haughty at times, in his dealings with high officials, commissioners or landdrosts, who were attempting, as he thought, to oppress his Hottentots. From the beginning he protested vigorously against the two-faced legislation for the native, which began in 1809, and refused to co-operate in working it. When Colonel Collins, the Commissioner appointed to report on the frontier districts, visited him in that year, the following dialogue took place between them :—

Commissioner : Will you, sir, agree to send over to Uitenhage, Hottentots whose services may be required by the magistrate, Major Cuyler?

Vanderkemp : No, sir. . . . To apprehend men as prisoners, and force them to labour in the manner proposed, is no part of my duty.

Commissioner : Do you not consider it your duty to compel the Hottentots to labour?

Vanderkemp : No, sir ; the Hottentots are recognised to be a free people, and the colonists have no more right to force them to labour in the way you propose, than you have to sell them as slaves.

Commissioner : Will you agree to prohibit Kaffirs from visiting your institution and send such as may resort to you under pretext of coming for instruction, as prisoners to Uitenhage?

Vanderkemp : Sir, my commission is to preach the Gospel to every creature, and I will preach the Gospel to every one who chooses to hear me. God has sent me, not to put chains upon the legs of Hottentots and Kaffirs, but to preach liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound.

After that interview, it is perhaps not surprising that Colonel Collins recommended the abolition of Bethelsdorp as an institution "designed for the benefit of the Hottentots rather than that of the Colony." After the Proclamation of 1809, the relations between the Government and the British missionary became something quite different from what they had been under Lord Macartney and General Dundas, and Vanderkemp's interview with Colonel Collins shows where their ways parted. After that Vanderkemp spent the two remaining years of his life in a continual warfare with landdrosts and field-cornets on behalf of the Hottentots. His health sank under the strain. "My spirits," he wrote a few months before his death, "are broken, and I am bowed down by the Landdrost Cuyler's continual oppression of the Hottentots." He died in January 1812.¹

For a number of years Bethelsdorp had a hard struggle against the disadvantages of its location and did not show much evidence of material prosperity. It was long decidedly inferior to Genadenthal, in that respect. But its standard of decency and order, though it may have seemed poor to Colonel Collins, was a great advance for the class of Hottentots whom Dr. Vanderkemp had collected about him, refugees from the rudest farms of Zwart Kops or Bruintjes Hoogte, and generally the most

¹ See Philip, *Researches*, vol. i. pp. 125-130.

miserable of the race whom oppression or maltreatment had driven to Bethelsdorp as an asylum. In 1810, the year before Vanderkemp's death, they had about 1,000 Hottentots on the books of the establishment, had built a church, a school, a water-mill, enclosures and the like, had taught their people to plant gardens, to plough and sow, to cut and sell timber, and, in most cases, to clothe themselves decently. Most of the able-bodied were always hired out in the service of the farmers or to the government for labour on public works. Even in 1826, when there were 2,000 adults on the books, only about 300 were permanently kept at the mission;¹ so that the outcry of the farmers against the establishment was not altogether so genuine as it seems. I suspect that it came very much from the worst class of them with whom the Hottentots were afraid to take service.

Vanderkemp's mission had also its peculiar merits. It was an educational centre for the native races, and was very successful in producing native teachers to carry on the work of civilisation amongst their countrymen. Even the Kaffir chiefs liked to visit Vanderkemp, and sometimes left their sons to be educated at Bethelsdorp. The deputation which visited the mission in 1817 reported to the London Directors that "the spot was ill chosen and labours

¹ *Missionary Register*, 1826, p. 34. See also Philip, vol. i. p. 194.

under great disadvantages, but the spiritual benefits received by many persons have far exceeded in real importance all its external defects." In addition to all, it was a kind of headquarters and shelter—not unneeded in these days—for the Hottentot race. Genadenthal, with its local advantages, might show more material prosperity, better cultivated orchards, better constructed houses, more imposing bridges and reservoirs, all the work of the once savage Hottentot, but Bethelsdorp was to him the stronghold of his race, the place where the charter of his rights was kept, and with which the men who fought all his battles were connected.

Any one who will take the trouble to read the letters and journals of Dr. Vanderkemp, as published in the Transactions of the London Missionary Society, or notice how respectfully he is referred to by the missionaries and travellers in that region,¹ will see that Dr. Theal's picture of him as unhinged in his mind and sunk in some undefined depth of degradation in his habits, is grossly unjust. The truth is, Dr. Vanderkemp had an old-fashioned style of faith, and thought more of the one thing needful than the many things expedient. His piety seems to have had a tinge of mysticism, not uncommon amongst speculative Hollanders of that age; at

¹ See particularly Robert Moffat's account of him, *Missionary Labours in South Africa*.

times he sought, as devout men have done before him, signs and omens in the passages of Scripture which he happened to read. At one time during his first mission to Gaika's kraal he had reason to think his life was in danger. Troops of savages, excited by the disturbances in the Zuurveld, were dancing round his hut every night and brandishing their assegais. Coenraad du Buys, too, one of the Dutch renegades and a most plausible ruffian, came and told him he need not be surprised if they were all put to death that day. Coenraad did not want the missionaries there to be witnesses of his intrigues and diplomacies with the Kaffirs, and I think there was something of a comedy in it also got up between him and Gaika, the latter not being sure as yet what the presence of white missionaries meant in his kraal. Vanderkemp, however, was not scared into flight, but sought comfort in reading his New Testament (Van Blaauw's Greek edition), and happened to open it at the page beginning with ἐγὼ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε ("It is I, be not afraid"), which, he says, "gave new strength to my soul."¹

As to the apostolic simplicity of his habits or the slight regard he had for some external refinements of civilisation, were they even more marked than I have any reason to believe they were, they represent views that have been held by many good

¹ *Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 8, p. 389.

men, and some great ones, from St. Francis to Tolstoi.¹ Some eccentricities in his dress and way of living may certainly be accounted for by the fact that he lived habitually amongst natives but lately reclaimed from savagery, and in a district far enough away from the resources of civilisation. Even Father Marsveld, the venerable head of the Moravian mission at Genadenthal, seems generally to have gone about without a hat. Nor is it true that he was indifferent to the practical side of the missionary's work. In his letters to the Society at home, he shows that he is quite alive to the expediency of teaching his Hottentots to earn their own subsistence, though he explains that for some years much could not be expected of his settlement. He was himself an indefatigable and fearless worker. In his pioneer mission in Kaffirland, he stuck to his post, when his partner, Mr. Edmonds, discouraged by the character of the people, abandoned it,² leaving Vander-

¹ His greatest deviation from European standards of propriety was his having taken a native woman for his wife, one of seven slaves whom he redeemed with his own money. But to enthusiastic believers in the future of the African, like Pringle and Kay, that seemed no blemish, and to-day there are some modern authorities, like Dr. Ludwig Wolff, strongly in favour of such a course for missionaries living amongst savage races. Dr. Philip, however, says that Vanderkemp lived to see his mistake.

² So Vanderkemp with characteristic benevolence states. Perhaps he was frightened by wild assegai dances and Coenraad du Buys. The London Society, on hearing of it, removed his name from their list.

kemp lonely enough there amongst the Kaffir kraals. The event, as noted in his journal, may give the reader a glimpse of the man and the spirit in which he worked :

To see my brother Edmonds departing from me was a very trying circumstance, but the Lord supported me. Before he left me, we went over the river into a wood, and there we wrestled in prayer once more, which was often interrupted by our tears. After I had recommended him to the grace of the Lord, I gave him my last blessing and he took final leave of me. I went upon a hill, and followed his waggon for about half an hour with my eyes, when, it sinking behind the mountains, I lost sight of him to see him no more. In the evening I preached on Eccles. iii. 10 ("I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it"). I spoke entirely extempore, and never before under such a deep impression, that I spoke in the name of the Lord, and by His spirit ; and, I hope, the word was blessed to two poor ignorant Hottentot women.

One can easily understand how this type of man with his fervent piety and disregard of conventional appearances, perhaps even some neglect of decorum and discipline according to European standards, might not appear of any worth to an unsympathetic Lichtenstein, or a British colonel with stiff military notions of order and how a collar should be worn ; but he should be no riddle to the modern student of history, and the insinuation of insanity contained in Dr. Theal's account of him ("Yet his conversation was rational and his memory was per-

fectly sound,") is simply ridiculous, to give it no worse name.

But Dr. Vanderkemp's fault in Dr. Theal's eyes is not, I suspect, that he did not wear a necktie and socks, articles which were not too common in the Graaff-Reinet district at this time, but that it was his mission at Bethelsdorp that first aroused the attention of the missionary societies of Britain and philanthropic circles generally to the frontier Boer's ill-treatment of his slaves and Hottentot servants. In the year 1811, Mr. Read, his partner at the Bethelsdorp mission, wrote a letter to the directors of the Society in London, in which he spoke of the inhuman treatment the Hottentots received from the Boers, especially in the district of Graaff-Reinet. In Uitenhage alone, (the south part of the old Graaff-Reinet province, where the mission was situated), he declared that Dr. Vanderkemp and he knew of a hundred murders that had been committed. Previous reports in the Transactions of the London Missionary Society, and in the evangelical magazines generally, had given the public an unfavourable idea of the Boer of the frontier, but now the philanthropic societies, amongst whom there were influential Members of Parliament like Wilberforce and Charles Grant (afterwards Lord Glenelg), were stirred into action; Zion Chapel and the Tabernacle, remembering John, Mary, and Martha, and their Dutch hymns, lifted up their voices, with the

result that the Secretary of State sent out instructions to the British Governor to investigate the matter.

The charges came up before the second Circuit Court which left Capetown in September, 1812. Dr. Vanderkemp had died, however, eight months before, and the loss of that commanding presence, which gave confidence to the native, seems to have partially crippled the prosecution.

The Black Circuit, as Dr. Theal calls it, turned out no great affair in the matter of convictions, or even of charges, considering the extent of the district, the mixed character and condition of its population, and the fact that the charges went back for several years. In the eastern districts of Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and George, seventeen Boers were charged with murder, but none convicted, two cases being postponed, and three being referred to Capetown. Fifteen were charged with violence, of whom seven were found guilty: two cases had to stand over on account of the non-appearance of witnesses in the one, and of the complainant in the other. That is the bald abstract Dr. Theal gives of the results. He says nothing of any particular cases, gives us nothing by which we may judge of their general character, or of the moral impression the evidence might leave on an impartial hearer. He avoids any concrete representation of the facts, and gives the reader only his general statement to go by. Even Judge Cloete, who was Regis-

trar for the Circuit Court in that district the year afterwards, gives the details of only one case in which a Boer woman of Uitenhage, doubtless with the best of intentions, was fatally mistaken in her treatment of a Hottentot's ailment, arousing of course unjust suspicions amongst his black brethren. But Judge Cloete, though a candid writer in matters that relate only to disputes between Briton and Boer, has to the full all the prejudices of a slave-holder against the work of the Bethelsdorp missionaries, and refers to Vanderkemp and Read, who had married native women, as having formed a "disreputable connection" and "lost all that respect which morality of conduct will ever command in society."¹ "In Society"—that of Capetown, I suppose, where Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland was just then, or had been very lately, the ruling figure; or that of the veldt, where of every four children born of a slave woman, &c. What Judge Cloete means, when the professional snuffle is removed, is that Vanderkemp and Read lost caste with society by their marriage, a different matter, and one which Vanderkemp at any rate had long ceased to care about.

What some of the cases of violence found proven

¹ See Cloete's *Five Lectures* (Lecture Second), republished by John Murray, London, as *The History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 37. Cloete does not name Vanderkemp and Read, but the reference is evident.

in these very Circuit Courts of 1812 amounted to, and the absurd leniency of the sentences occasionally passed on the offenders, may be found in Pringle's *Narrative* (p. 254).

One miscreant, named De Clerq, a wealthy colonist, who was convicted, upon the clearest evidence, of having been in the *habitual practice* of mutilating his Hottentots in a most inhuman and indescribable manner, was merely subjected to a fine of 500 rix dollars, or somewhat less than £50. And another monster, in the district of Swellendam, named Cloete, who was found guilty of shooting, in mere wanton wickedness, a Hottentot woman, with a child in her arms, was solemnly doomed to kneel down blindfolded, to have a naked sword passed over his neck by the executioner, and to be banished the colony under the penalty of becoming liable to a "severer punishment" if he should return; the latter part of the sentence, being merely intended to save appearances, was never actually enforced.

The English Governor (Sir John Cradock), it appears, made some "severe animadversions" on these and similar sentences, after which Pringle says "the Circuit Courts became somewhat more attentive to outward decency, at least in their decisions."

The missionaries no doubt might at times be misled by the unfounded or exaggerated reports of Hottentots, but it is clear also that the early Circuit Courts, composed of men who were themselves slave-owners, had a strong tendency to screen their countrymen in this racial conflict. With regard to the results of the "Black Circuit," especially we must remember that it was generally a matter of great difficulty for a

Hottentot servant, or a slave, on a distant and lonely farm, either to lay a complaint or give evidence against his master. The landdrost did not and could not know the twentieth part of what was being done in his wide and sparsely populated district; and the field-cornets or commandants who did the ordinary police work of the district were themselves farmers, who rarely interfered except to support the authority, however arbitrary, of the Boer master.¹ There was nothing easier than to intimidate a Hottentot or a slave who was totally dependent, he and his family, on his master for any of the comforts of life, who had perhaps a five or six days' journey to the nearest drostdy, during which he was liable to meet with accidents, and who at the end of his journey was thrown into prison till the day of the trial, and then brought out to a court filled with a vengeful and dominant race, from whose prejudices the Bench was by no means exempt. Pringle or Philip, I forgot which, has a lively picture of one of those court scenes, the Hottentot complainant, practically a prisoner, uneasy and apprehensive in his situation, the accused Boer strutting contemptuously about the court, nodding to the judges or whispering in their

¹ I use here the formal testimony and almost the very words of the Fiscal, W. S. van Rhyneveld, one of the most experienced officials in the Colony and afterwards Chief Justice. See *Records*, 1801-1803, pp. 92, 93.

ear ; his comrades muttering audibly for the Hottentot's benefit, "The rascal, he'll pay for it" ; for the Hottentot was punished if he failed to prove his case. That of course would be the local court, but the partiality if more decorously disguised was none the less present in the higher one. It is quite evident in the lectures of Judge Cloete, a man of high character and himself an official of the Circuit Court.

On the whole when I consider these things, and compare the many testimonies on the subject from Sparrman and Barrow to Pringle and Olive Schreiner (the latter's story of Dirk and the thing that was baked in the oven belongs about this period), I am disposed to think that the sheet of the Black Circuit, as it is somewhat fancifully called, is perhaps too white. I could almost dare affirm that there was not a Boer in Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage who was not well aware that the list of seventeen charges of violence brought forward by the missionaries did not amount to one half or even one quarter of the cases which really occurred, during the period covered, in that district. I say nothing of the light in which he would regard them.¹

What is more, I do not see that Dr. Theal says

¹ In much later times a British farmer flogged a Kaffir servant to death in Natal, was acquitted by a jury of his countrymen, and accompanied home by a band of music. See Bryce's *Impressions of South Africa*, p. 446.

anything explicitly or straightforwardly to the contrary. He does not explicitly say that there were no real grounds for the missionaries' charges. He only says, "It was no use telling the people that the trials had shown the missionaries to have been the dupes of idle story-tellers," an assertion which it would be possible to make in this way, were there nothing more than the solitary case of the Uitenhage widow quoted by Cloete, to support it. He does not actually assert that the London Society missionaries were slanderers, whose statements were not worthy of attention ; he only says, "As for the missionaries of the London Society, from that time they were held by the frontier colonists to be slanderers and public enemies whose statements were not to be regarded as worthy of attention." (*History of South Africa*, chap. xxxi. p. 166.)

The missionary no doubt has his faults ; he may at times be indiscreet in his zeal and too ready to accept the tales of converts or *protégés*, he may do harm sometimes by being too aggressive and insisting upon a higher standard than is possible, and by undervaluing that which already exists. Not to go abroad for illustrations, one has seen something of all that in conflicts between the missionary and the local authorities in the North-west of Canada. But even where I thought the missionary ill-advised in his action and too pugnacious

in his temper, I knew that the facts he stated were true in the main; and it is difficult to believe that experienced missionaries like Mr. Read, and Dr. Vanderkemp who had lived twelve years in the district, should be grossly deceived or mistaken in so grave a matter, and one which might be said to come under their personal supervision. As to their sincerity there can be no doubt at all in the mind of any one capable of reading the literature of an age that is past.

The general effects of the first Circuit Courts, including the "Black" one, were such as no one will quarrel with. Both the cautious statistical Bird and the fervent Pringle agree that there was a decided decrease in the worst class of outrages after their establishment, and Judge Cloete admits, though in guarded terms (Lecture i., p. 12), the same fact.

X

The Case of the Bezuidenhouts—The Rebellion of Slachter's
Nek—Dr. Theal's Heroics.

FROM 1806 to 1815 the great war continued to rumble on in Europe with events which left the British ministers small leisure perhaps to attend to the destinies of a few thousand grazier farmers in a distant — part of the empire. The death of Pitt, stricken by Austerlitz; Jena and the Berlin Decrees; Eylau, Friedland; the retreat of Corunna, Wagram, and the disaster of Walcheren, the new French Kingdom of Italy, the new French Kingdom of Spain, all heavy news in these years for the British people, except to Charles Fox and a few Radicals. It was always the same tale; as Wordsworth sang after Jena and the fall of Prussia,

Another year! another deadly blow,
Another mighty empire overthrown!

Some events touched the Cape more nearly. The annexation of Holland, made formally complete by

Napoleon in 1810, vindicated the British occupation of the Colony. In the same year, the Mauritius, a nest for French privateers preying on English commerce in the East, and only needing the support of the Cape as a base of supplies to become a great French arsenal, was taken by a British squadron. About the same time the Tyrol was subdued and its patriot Hofer shot by the soldiers of that nation which a few years ago had proclaimed itself the universal defender of the liberty of peoples. Universal defender now become, by a most natural development, universal oppressor of peoples!

Trafalgar and the Nile, however, had made some amends, and indeed the stout soldiers and sailors who did Britain's work at the Cape and the other outposts of the empire seem quite unaffected by the avalanche. "All right out here," is their general tone, "if only you at home stand steady and resolute." At length Wellington began to stem the tide a little at Talavera and the lines of Torres Vedras, and by the time the "Black Circuit" had finished its work, the Retreat from Moscow and the Battle of Leipzig commenced to give a new face to the situation in Europe.

Meantime Cape Colony during these years of war and change in Europe continued growing quietly enough under the ægis of Britain's naval supremacy which even Napoleon could not contest. Under Governor Sir John Cradock (1811-1814) the Kaffir

clans were expelled at last from their old ground in the Zuurveld as related in a preceding chapter. The Government then offered the land there in lots of 2,000 morgen (about 4,000 acres) each, to the Boers, but was not successful in inducing them to settle there, for a variety of reasons, the inadequacy of the grant according to Boer standards, the difficulty in procuring Hottentot herdsmen, the dread of Kaffir vengeance and depredations, and the growing tendency to seek farms on the northern frontier, where native servants, especially bushmen, were more easily got hold of, combined to make the Boers indifferent to the pastures of the Zuurveld.

Equally unsuccessful were Sir John Cradock's well-meant endeavours to induce the Boers to turn their squatter farms with their ill-defined boundaries, which gave rise to perpetual quarrels, into quit-rent holdings which they could sell or divide amongst their heirs. The grazier Boer had no particular attachment to his farm, and as long as there were plenty of unoccupied lands on the northern border, he would not pay a stiver extra for a title. There were few farms, Bird says, which remained two descents in a family.¹

Sir John indeed laboured faithfully at his difficult task. He abolished the old Dutch law which prohibited baptized slaves from being sold, but which

¹ *State of the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 104.

really operated as a bar to their receiving any Christian instruction at all, and made most of them the proselytes of Mohammedan priests—no bad thing for them either in the opinion of Alfred Cole and travellers of that class. Sir John also established public schools for poor white children, and gave due encouragement to missions, granting sites for Pacaltsdorp and Theopolis to the London Missionary Society, although his landdrost Cuyler bore with too heavy a hand, perhaps, on Bethelsdorp, and he himself had re-introduced the apprenticeship system.

It was certainly very hard to hold the scales of justice evenly in a slave and serf-owning community. There can be no better illustration of the difficulties the Government had to deal with, and no better justification of the Bethelsdorp missionaries than the celebrated case of the Bezuidenhouts, which occurred in 1815, three years after the "Black Circuit."

This miserable story, out of which Boer writers have made a patriotic legend, really sets in a very clear light the difficulty the Government experienced in maintaining a decent standard of law and justice amongst the Boers of the eastern frontier. Frederick Bezuidenhout belonged to that turbulent band of Brintjes Hoogte farmers, always mixed up in Kaffir intrigues, illicit cattle trading and any wild work that was afoot on the frontier. A charge

of illegal detention of a Hottentot servant had been laid against him. The deputy landdrost happened to be Andries Stockenstrom, a humane and just man, who inquired into the case and found the Hottentot's statement to be correct. But the Boer refused to appear before the local magistrate. A complaint was then laid before the circuit judges at Graaff-Reinet, but their summons also was disregarded. The judges then issued a warrant for his apprehension, and the landdrost sent the messenger of the court to the field-cornet of the district, a sort of deputy sheriff, say, in his civil capacity, for his assistance to make the apprehension. But Bezuidenhout's character was such that field-cornet Opperman was afraid to accompany the messenger, and advised him to apply to the nearest military post. The lieutenant commanding there furnished him with a party from the Hottentot corps which served as a frontier guard. But Bezuidenhout resisted to the last, and after firing on the soldiers, retired with two servants to an impregnable cave, where he had previously stored a quantity of ammunition. After being repeatedly summoned to surrender, he was shot dead by one of the party as he was taking aim at a Hottentot soldier.

In an ordinary civilised community the public opinion would no doubt be that Frederick Bezuidenhout had had every chance and consideration that the law could allow him. But such was not the opinion

of the friends and relatives who assembled at the dead man's funeral. They were irritated, generally, by the operation of this law calling the master to account for ill-treatment of his coloured servants, and they appear to have been specially irritated by the fact that one of this despised race of Hottentots could under authority of the law shoot one of themselves with impunity. Probably they felt very much as a Southern American would feel if he were arrested and taken to jail by a black policeman. Their point of view no doubt was a wrong one; the Hottentot soldier represented the majesty and authority of the law, not his own race, and had been employed only when all civil authority had failed. But such considerations, if they were capable of making them, could not cool the blood of the Graaff-Reinet frontiersman. A conspiracy was formed, and again all the wild spirits of the district, the Prinsloos, Erasmuses, Kloppers, and Krugers, took up arms.

Their plan was the usual one, to rouse all the disaffected spirits on the frontier, to persuade and partly to intimidate the rest into the movement, and with the help of the Kaffir tribes, to whom they actually promised the restoration of the Zuurveld, to invade the Colony. They did succeed in inducing a commando which had been assembled on some pretext of a Kaffir invasion to join them. But the great chief Gaika, though he had intimate

relations with them, was wary and stood by his alliance with the British. He hinted to the Boers his doubts of the success of their enterprise, telling them with Kaffir wit and cunning "that he must see how the wind blew first before he took a seat at the fire." Notwithstanding this failure with the great chief the conspirators persisted, and tried to raise the Tarka district of Graaff-Reinet by the false announcement that Gaika was to join them, and threatening as usual to leave those who declined to the mercy of the Kaffirs. One of the most active in the insurrection was Jan Bezuidenhout, a brother of the deceased. He drew up the rebels in a circle and exacted an oath of fidelity from them ; after which they disbanded for a couple of days to gather all the forces they could from the various districts. On the seventeenth of November they again assembled and marched to Slachter's Nek. Their attempt to rouse the country was a failure, like their attempt to rouse the Kaffirs, and their last muster at Slachter's Nek did not, according to Dr. Theal, number more than fifty burghers. Judge Cloete, however, in his *Five Lectures* speaks of an additional main body.

Whatever their numbers, they were obstinate men and seem to have been kept to the last in some hopes by Gaika, for neither prayers nor threats would make them disband till an armed force under Colonel Cuyler, the landdrost of Uitenhage, had been assem-

bled and was upon them. Then eighteen of the insurgents gave themselves up ; the rest fled, but some were afterwards retaken, and some came in of their own accord. Five of the most desperate, headed by Jan Bezuidenhout, fled with their families into Kaffirland. They were pursued by a mixed body of burghers and Hottentots under Commandant Willem Nel and Major Fraser. An advanced party of the Hottentots under an English officer was successful in ambushing the fugitives. Two of them had previously surrendered, two more were now captured while absent from the laager ; what became of the fifth, Jan Bezuidenhout, I will give in Mr. Theal's own words :

The soldiers now approached the waggons, and called to Jan Bezuidenhout to surrender. He was an illiterate frontier farmer, whose usual residence was a wattle and daub structure, hardly deserving the name of a house, and who knew nothing of refinement after the English town pattern. (*Want of necktie and socks no reproach here, at any rate.*) His code of honour, too, was in some respects different from that of modern Englishmen, but it contained at least one principle common to the noblest minds in all sections of the race to which he belonged ; to die rather than do that which is degrading. And for him it would have been unutterably degrading to have surrendered to the pandours. Instead of doing so he fired at them. His wife, Martha Faber, a true South African countrywoman, in this extremity showed that the Batavian blood had not degenerated by change of clime. She stepped to the side of her husband, saying, "Let us die together," and as he discharged one gun loaded another for his use. What more could even Kenau Hasselaer have done ? (*Hist. of South Africa*, vol. 3, p. 193).

Jan's son, a boy of fourteen years, also took an active part in the skirmish, the result of which was that a Hottentot soldier was killed, and Jan himself died, some hours afterwards, from the wounds he had received.

Now I am quite willing to see a kind of savage heroism in Jan Bezuidenhout which calls for pity rather than severe judgment. He was perhaps the raw material out of which a good soldier may be made, but he was a wild cateran with notions which would have made all decent government impossible, and which had seriously threatened the public peace of the whole district, and might, had Gaika been willing, have brought on the Colony, on his own countrymen, the evils of a civil war and a Kaffir raid combined. There is some danger, as well as some absurdity, in a responsible historian, the official historian of South Africa, making a kind of heroic legend for the example of youth out of Jan Bezuidenhout's story. I doubt if those who really respect the fame of Kenau Hasselaer and the soundness of national traditions will much appreciate Dr. Theal's complimentary reference to the widow of Haarlem.

The Bezuidenhout affair is the kind of thing which has happened in the early history of every country, when the central government was beginning to extend its authority and its civilised conceptions of law over remote and half-barbarous provinces. It could

be paralleled by a dozen stories out of Walter Scott of the period when the legal administration of the South first began to assert itself in the Highlands, such stories as that of *The Highland Widow*, for instance; they are pathetic enough to all, and to a Scotchman they have a peculiar pathos; but not even Mr. Theodore Napier, the President of the Scottish Patriotic Association, who sits down to dinner every day in kilts and with a skene-dhu in his stockings, would think of making them occasions for tall talk about the honour of his race. The colour which Dr. Theal has spread, with no great delicacy of touch, over this story of Jan Bezuidenhout simply means that he is insidiously pointing the moral against the higher conceptions of law and justice represented by British rule in South Africa.

Dr. Theal, it is true, has suppressed these heroics in his later popular history belonging to the *Story of the Nations* series; but in his Dutch history, written three years ago for the use of Dutch youth in South Africa, they reappear with special touches which are very characteristic of the manner in which Dr. Theal varies his narratives to suit different times and readers of different views. In his Dutch history, he is silent regarding the fact stated in his larger history, that a commando of Dutch burghers were acting in concert with the Hottentot soldiers in pursuit of Jan Bezuidenhout, and he concludes this pitiful story of a

half-savage frontiersman's resistance to the just operation of law in the following high style :

The spirit which impelled these two men (Frederik and Jan Bezuidenhout) to this way of acting, whatever name you give it, was the spirit which enabled the South African Boers to preserve their special civilisation (*hunne beschaving te behouden*) in the remote lands of the interior [*to which they afterwards migrated*], and kept them from the degradation into which the Portuguese sank through recognising the coloured races as their equals. . . . They could die, but they would not submit to the shame of surrendering to Hottentots. Such was their law of honour.

That is the grand plea, I perceive, by which the Boer justifies to his own conscience his treatment of the native races. But whether it has been the conscience of the Boer, or the protection which British suzerainty has given the native races, which has saved South Africa from being degraded by a half-breed civilisation, and how far this principle of Dr. Theal's covers the case of wild Frederik Bezuidenhout defying the law-courts of his own district, readers may determine for themselves.

The end of the Slachter's Nek rebellion was that of the thirty-nine prisoners taken, five were hanged after due trial before a high court of justice held in the district of Uitenhage, that is, the southern part of the old Graaff-Reinet district. The others were let off with punishments mostly of a very light character, one month's imprisonment or £5 fine. The judges who tried them were Dutch, the clerk of the court was Dutch, the prosecutor was the landdrost of

Uitenhage, Dr. Vanderkemp's old opponent and a very good friend to the Boer. All the civil officials connected with the affair from the first summons of Frederik Bezuidenhout to the final pronouncing of the sentence were Dutch. The only interference recorded on the part of the British authorities is the pardon the British Governor granted to one man who had been condemned to death along with the other five. Yet in reading Mr. Theal's account we get a subtle impression of grave injustice, or at the very least, of extraordinary rigour on the part of the British Governor. And in his *Story of the Nations* volume, as well as his Dutch history, he adds the remark, that "amongst the families concerned the event was long remembered with very bitter feelings towards the British authorities." It is very likely indeed, and might happen with small blame to the British authorities. But I think Judge Cloete's way of noticing that fact is a fairer and more sensible way than Dr. Theal's.¹ But we are assisting, you see, at the building up of legends which will be of no small use to Presidents Kruger and Steyn and Mr. Hofmeyr of the *Africander Bund*.

¹ Judge Cloete admits both the wild character of the originators and the justness of the punishment, "it [the rebellion] originated," he says, "entirely in the wild unruly passions of a few clans of persons who could not suffer themselves to be brought under the authority of the law: the sentence passed upon them was no other than might have been expected in a case of overt rebellion thus committed." (*Lecture I.*)

XI

The British Immigration of 1820—Troubles of the New Settlers
—British Farmers in the Zuurveld—The Scotch Settlement
at Glen Lynden—Thomas Pringle's *African Sketches*—The
Old Home of the Bezuidenhouts.

IN 1815 the long struggle with Napoleon was at last brought to an end on the plains of Waterloo. Great Britain had come out of the conflict greatly increased in reputation and possessions, mistress of the seas and covered with military glory, with a prestige, in short, which for many years did much to facilitate her development as an empire and her schemes in every part of the world. But with peace came the reckoning up of accounts, and a host of problems regarding internal administration and the government of colonies and dependencies which, now that the tension of the war was over, called for the consideration of the British Ministers. Amongst these was the condition of Cape Colony. One result of the war had been that at the Peace of Paris (1814) Great Britain found herself confirmed by a convention

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with the Netherlands¹ and the consent of the Great Powers in the permanent possession of the Cape, and the Government accordingly now began to take measures to strengthen its position in the colony.

The most important of these measures was the encouragement of British immigration. In 1820, with the assistance of money from Parliament, over 4,000 British immigrants were landed at Algoa Bay. Most of them were located in Albany, the old Zuurveld, a good corn-growing country with plenty of wood and water, which, however, the Boers, for various reasons, could not be induced to occupy. It was expected that the presence of the immigrants would steady that turbulent region and interpose a neutral element between those inveterate enemies, the Boer and the Kaffir.

The new settlers were a motley band, composed of all sorts and conditions of men, jovial English farmers, staid Scotch agriculturists from the Lothians, of Presbyterian faith and discipline, polemical Wesleyans, who fought points of theology all the way across, respectable tradesmen, fishermen and watermen from the Channel ports, distressed artisans from the towns, and parties of pauper agricultural labourers, not always too respectable or likely to make a good class of emigrants under the trying conditions

¹ Britain gave the Dutch six millions sterling and returned Java and the Spice Islands to them.

of a pioneer settlement in a wild district. There were some, too, of a higher social class, half-pay officers and younger sons, who had come out with a small capital to try their fortunes in a new country.

They seem to have been rather appalled at the wild appearance of that part of the coast which they saw first. "Heh Sirs ! but this is an ill-faured and outlandish-looking country," had been the exclamation of a canny Scot, who came out with Pringle in the brig *Brilliant*, as he looked with a grave face at the bleak hills and sands of False Bay ; and as they sailed along the coast to their destination at Algoa Bay, and gazed at the great headlands and rugged mountain ridges of that district, sublime but wild and lonely looking, their feelings rose into something like consternation, except in the case of some Scotch mountaineers, who saw something not quite unfamiliar to them in the great Knysna forests or the ranges of the Zitzikamma.

The Colonial Government had made careful and extensive preparations for their disembarkation and conveyance to the respective lands allotted to them. Camp equipage and rations, Highland soldiers, tall Dutch Boers with their teams, and swarthy Hottentots to assist them, nothing seems to have been lacking or deficient. But the best a Government can do for a new population of settlers is little compared with what they must learn to do for them-

selves, and we can imagine the situation and feelings of many of the parties (ten associated families at least were required for an independent location) escorted by a field-cornet to some wild valley among the mountains and there left for the most part to their own resources; not altogether, however, for the Government always stood by to help a little where it was necessary. The neighbouring Boers, too, everywhere were friendly and helpful, supplying the newcomers with such cuttings, graftings, seeds, &c., as were suitable to the soil. Even that turbulent race of Bruintjes Hoogte and the Boschberg, Prinsloos, Labuschagnes, Kloppers, Erasmuses, &c., were good neighbours to the Lothian farmers who settled near them on the Baviaan's River.

The new settlers, of course, had to make their own huts and furniture, and learn the new conditions of doing everything from planting orchards and drying fruits to driving an ox-team. In some exposed parts, too, they had to guard against thieving Kaffirs or Hottentots, and were liable to be roused at nights by the roar of a lion prowling round after their cattle. What the poorer and more thriftless class amongst them could do in such circumstances, we may guess. They were unfortunate also. Two successive seasons of blight, followed in the third by a destructive hurricane, reduced many of the emigrants to the greatest misery, which was only partially alleviated by all the

efforts the Government could make in the way of distributing rations and seed-wheat *gratis*. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that numbers of them, especially the mechanics and general labourers, abandoned their farms and sought work in Grahams-town, Cradock, Port Elizabeth, Graaff-Reinet and other places which were now rising into importance. There they ultimately formed the artisan and shop-keeping class of that part of the country.

The Government had also made a mistake in dealing with the emigrants. With the idea of creating a denser agricultural population they had restricted the grants of land to a hundred acres for each family, in a country where the Boer considered anything less than six thousand insufficient to make sure of water and pasturage. The grants were enlarged in 1825, to those who were still on their lands, and I think there may have been prudence in the Government's delay.

But notwithstanding their misfortunes and the privations which they endured for a year or two, many of the settlers soon began to do well ; and on the whole it is agreed that the immigration of 1820 turned out eventually one of the most successful experiments ever made on that scale. In 1824 George Thompson, travelling along the coast near the Kowie River, describes the locations of the better class, the "heads of families," in terms which would not dis-

credit an English nobleman's parks and lawns, to which indeed he does not hesitate to compare them, "neat, picturesque cottages surrounded by luxuriant woods and copses of evergreens, in the disposal of which the wanton hand of Nature seemed to have rivalled the most tasteful efforts of art. . . . flocks of sheep pasturing on the soft green hills, while the foaming surge broke along the beach on my right hand." Evidently a beautiful and fertile country, this part of the Zuurveld, old land of the Ghonaqua and Kaffir now passed away from them for ever. With the locations of the ordinary settlers also, Thompson was much pleased. "The hedges and ditches, and wattled fences presented home-looking pictures of neatness and industry, very different from the rude and slovenly premises of the back-country boors."¹

By far the best account of any of these new settlements is that given by Thomas Pringle in his *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, from which I have so often quoted. There the reader may see how a good class of Scottish emigrants from the Lothians, with no superfluity of capital, could in the worst of times hold their own and eventually reach a high degree of prosperity, that degree, at least, which seems to be characteristic of the country, "an abundance of the comforts of life and few causes of anxiety for the future."

¹ Thompson, *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 33-37.

This Scottish settlement was situated just over the mountains beyond Brintjes Hoogte and the Boschberg, with the Boers of the Tarka for its neighbours on the north, and the kraals of Gaika not far to the east of it; a wild mountainous district and an exposed part of the frontier, but enclosing a beautiful and fertile valley, about six miles long, where the settlers were located. "The place looks no sae mickle amiss," was the comment of one of the party on his first sight of it.

It was as the leader of this band of emigrants that Thomas Pringle, the son of a Lothian farmer, came to Africa. Pringle had received a University education and possessed literary talent really of a high order. Whatever strikes his fancy in the way of novel picturesque scenery, of romantic or pathetic incident he describes in a vivid, often masterly manner, with great truth of impression and a fluent, if slightly prolix, art of narrative. He has quite a genius indeed in descriptive language, and never fails to seize the true features and capture the right word when the thing is novel enough to stir his imagination. Take his description of the Elephants' Glen, for example, "inhabited by a troop of those gigantic animals, whose strange wild cry was heard by us the whole night long, as we bivouacked by the river, sounding like a trumpet among the moonlight mountains."

But with all his literary gift Pringle has mastered nothing, unless it be this field of picturesque description, has organised no materials, developed no line of thought historical, psychological, ethical, or statistical, and made it his own. Hence even in his prose he remains too dependent on casual inspirations of an imaginative or sentimental kind. There is a want of observation in his work regarding ordinary men and their ordinary ways which is not quite made up for by occasional excursions on the Flora and Fauna of South Africa, or moving descriptions of Kaffir prisoners in the *tronk*. All the same the *Narrative* is a very fine style of work, conveying general picturesque impressions, and throwing high lights here and there on things with something of the grace and power of a Chateaubriand.

As a poet also Pringle's reputation must rest altogether on a few vivid impressional pictures of native African life. In his Scottish poems, he is only one voice more in the crowd of those minor singers who caught something of the grace of Campbell and Beattie, or yielded to the seductions of romance in the octosyllabic verse which Scott and Byron wielded so well. But when he once reached the virgin soil of South Africa, where there was so much which appealed to the imagination of that age, the desert, the noble savage and the tragic scenes of slavery, but had been sung of hitherto only by poets like Cowper

and Hannah More from the safe distance of their evangelical parlours, Pringle's muse took fire and produced a few pictures of the Bush-boy, the Kaffir, the Hottentot and the Koranna, which deserve to be better known than they are. The true rhythmical power of the lines on the Bush-boy has haunted many an ear since it fascinated Coleridge's :—

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side :
Away—away—in the Wilderness vast,
Where the White Man's foot hath never passed,
And the quivered Coranna or Bechuán
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan.

It is from Pringle indeed that we get our best sketches of African life and scenery at this period, a little idealised perhaps in the style of Campbell, the moral sublime and tender at times overpowering the natural character of the thing ; but still the only life-coloured pictures we have of the frontier, with its different races, Boers, British, Hottentots and Kaffirs. For the accounts of missionaries and travellers, though they occasionally contain dramatic pages, rarely possess that power of giving the atmosphere of life without which details are so apt to be distortions and produce a misleading impression, especially if the writer has a particular theory or view to support. Pringle's work, therefore, may fairly be considered, except for some half-savage, half-sublime breathings from Kaffir poet-chiefs and "wise men," as the first literary fruit of

African soil, though as yet clearly exotic in its flavour. From his volume of poems, once well known under the title of *African Sketches*, I make the following extracts, which will give the reader some idea of the Scottish settlement at Glen Lynden, as the old home of the Bezuidenhouts was now called.

First, you observe, our own Glen Lynden clan
 (To whom I'm linked like a true Scottish man)
 Are all around us. Past that dark ravine—
 Where on the left, gigantic crags are seen,
 And the steep Tarka mountains, stern and bare,
 Close round the upland cleughs of lone Glen Tair,
 Our Lothian friends with their good mother dwell,
 Beside yon kranz¹ whose pictured records tell
 Of Bushmen's huntings in the days of old,
 Ere here Bezuidenhout² had fixed his fold.
 —Then up the widening vale extend your view,
 Beyond the clump that skirts the Lion's Cleugh,
 Past our old camp, the willow-trees among,
 Where first these mountains heard our Sabbath song ;
 And mark the settlers' homes,³ as they appear
 With cultured fields and orchard-gardens near,
 And cattle-kraals, associate or single,
 From fair Craig-Rennie up to Clifton Pringle.

¹ Steep rock, on which the wild Bushmen, low in the scale of races, yet with an art instinct greater than that of Kaffir or Boer, drew and coloured his rude pictures.

² Of the Brintjes Hoochte rebels, some of whom as inveterate breeders of strife on the Kaffir frontier had been transferred to the northern district.

³ Scotch emigrants, who had given Lothian names to their farms.

Then there is Captain Harding¹ at Three Fountains
Near Cradock—forty miles across the mountains :
I like his shrewd remarks on things and men,
And canter o'er to dinner now and then.
—There's Landdrost Stockenstrom² at Graaff-Reinet,
A man, I'm sure, you would not soon forget,
Who though in this wild country born and bred,
Is able in affairs, in books well read,
And—what's more meritorious in the case—
A zealous friend to Afric's swarthy race.

—Sometimes a pleasant guest, from parts remote,
Cheers for a passing night our rustic cot :
As, lately, the gay-humoured Captain Fox,
With whom I roamed 'mid Koonap's woods and rocks.

While the wild elephants in groups stood still,
And wondered at us on their woody hill.
—Here, too, sometimes, in more religious mood,
We welcome Smith or Brownlee, grave and good,
Or fervid Read³—to natives, kneeling round
Proclaiming the Great Word of glorious sound :
Or, on some Christian mission bravely bent,
Comes Philip⁴ with his apostolic tent.

¹ Deputy-Landdrost.

² Captain Andries Stockenstrom, afterwards Lieutenant-Governor, the same whom Dr. Theal paints in his *History*, vol. iv. p. 54, as a kind of half-monster, driven by jealousy and ambition into an unaccountable perversion of his past career, because he took the side of the natives in the Border policy question. As Pringle's verses show, he had always been an advocate of the claims of the native.

³ James Read, of the Bethelsdorp mission.

⁴ Dr. Philip, of the *Researches*.

In what follows, we have a glimpse of the native element in this wild pastoral scene. Flink is the Hottentot herdsman :

—Tis almost sunset. What a splendid sky !
And hark—the homeward cowboy's echoing cry,
Descending from the mountains. This fair clime
And scene recall the patriarchal time,
When Hebrew herdsman fed their teeming flocks
By Arnon's meads and Kirjath-Arba's rocks.

—Ha ! armed Caffers with the shepherd Flink
In earnest talk ? Ay, now I mark their mien :
It is Powana from Zwart-Kei, I ween,
The Amatembu chief. He comes to pay
A friendly visit, promised many a day :
To view our settlement in Lynden Glen,
And smoke the Pipe of Peace with Scottish men.
And his gay consort, Moya, too, attends,
To see "The World" and Amanglezi ¹ friends,
Her fond heart fluttering high with anxious schemes
To gain the enchanting beads that haunt her dreams !²

Yet let us not these simple folk despise ;
Just such our sires appeared in Cæsar's eyes :
And in the course of Heaven's evolving plan,
By Truth made free, the long-scorned African,
His Maker's image radiant in his face,
Among earth's noblest sons shall find his place.

A somewhat old-fashioned idyll, no doubt, alike in its valour and its rhythms, but interesting as a picture

¹ English.

² Slight idealisation here in the Campbell style, where there might have been with more truth a picture of Groot Willem of the Boschberg dismounting his huge bulk at Pringle's door of a Sunday morning.

of that district ; Bruintjes Hoogte, or at least the Baviaans' River valley, seen by clear, honest Lothian eyes, even if there is something of a pious visionary light in them. But who knows ? The instinct of a Pringle is a deeper as well as a better thing than the cynical realism of a Hofmeyr or a Theal, and more likely to be justified by time.

Pringle did not remain long in the Glen Lynden settlement, the farm he occupied being only held by him as care-taker for his brother. He found his way to Capetown, and started a newspaper there of advanced liberal and philanthropic opinions, which soon brought him into collision with the authorities. Eventually he returned to England where he became secretary of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, and as such, as well as by his writings, continued to exercise some influence on the destinies of South Africa. He was a high-minded, generous enthusiast, who worked with his whole soul in the humanitarian movement, which was the *Zeit-geist* of that age in England, and had a faith in the divine government of the world which the modern economist reserves for his own figures.

XII

Administrative Changes—Lord Charles Somerset as Governor—The Liberty of the Press—The Liberal Party at Cape-town—The Constitution of the Colony—Meeting of Somerset and Gaika—Makana the Prophet and Warrior—The Kaffir Rising—The Ceded Territory.

THE presence of a large number of British settlers brought with it new problems for the Government, and suggested various changes in the administration. The new immigrants spoke no Dutch, and with their arrival and the rapid growth of towns and farms bearing British names, the Government had a fair opportunity of introducing another measure designed to bring the Colony into closer connection with Great Britain and the other parts of the Empire. This was the substitution of English instead of Dutch as the language of official documents and of the law courts, a change which was gradually effected by a series of enactments ranging over six years, from 1822 to 1828. No doubt the British Government was looking forward to an eventual fusion of the two white races in the Colony, and felt that a dual language would be an impediment to that. But naturally the Dutch popu-

lation of the Colony would feel it to be a grievance, a kind of ostentatious proclamation of British supremacy. It was attended also by some practical inconveniences to them, as in the case of Dutch jurymen who might not know English. But there was nothing injudicious in the attempt made at a time when it had some chance of success. The Governor (Lord Charles Somerset) had done all he could to prepare the way. Free schools, with English teachers, had been established almost in every village, and Dr. Thom, of Capetown, who had this field under his charge, reported in 1827 that the English language had made great progress in most of the villages. (*Missionary Register*, 1828, p. 40.) Even so cool an observer as Wilberforce Bird considered at this time that what between English schools and the frequent intermarriages of Dutch and English, the Colony would soon be "completely anglicised."

After all, if there is to be an Empire, there ought to be an official language for the Empire, and as much recognition of its precedency as is compatible with the natural rights and feelings of the different races under its flag. Had Cape Colony stood alone and Dutch racial sentiment not been stirred long afterwards by events far outside of its border, the propriety of the measure might never have been questioned even by Dr. Theal. But many years afterwards, in 1882, when Mr. Gladstone's surrender after Majuba

Hill and the formation of the Africander Bund had given the Dutch a new sense of power, and even, as was natural and indeed inevitable, a hope of ultimate supremacy, the Cape Parliament made the Dutch language again official. No one, of course, objects to that. But it is not altogether by legislation that the status of things is finally settled; and it is a fact of some significance that after all Cape colonists like Olive Schreiner and Dr. Theal, in spite of their Dutch sympathies, prefer to write their works in English.

Other changes which the British Government made about this period were the alterations in the administration of the laws. With the influx of a new British population, the old boards of the landdrost and *heemraden*, which had combined all the functions of financial, judicial, and civil administration in a paternal kind of way, were considered inapplicable and out of date. Accordingly a new administration, with resident magistrates as judges, civil commissioners for ordinary business, and justices of peace throughout the district was created. Even Dr. Theal, in his *History of the Boers*, admits that "every one now recognises this to have been a beneficial measure." But in his later Histories, in his volume in the *Story of the Nations* series, for example, he has not a word to say in its favour, but speaks coldly of it, as well as of the substitution of an independent supreme court for the old burgher senate (heartily approved of in

his larger *History*) as a "remodelling after the English pattern." He mixes it up with the question of the substitution of English for Dutch as the language of the courts, and concludes the subject ominously with these words: "And now was heard the first murmuring of a cry that a few years later resounded through the Colony, and men and women began to talk of the regions devastated by the Zulu wars, if it might not be possible there to find a refuge from British rule." Dr. Theal, like Gaika, is evidently "taking his seat by the fire," as he thinks the wind blows.

It is easy to make general representations of this kind and not difficult even to find some contemporary utterance which appears to justify them. Of course, every one may understand that there was a difference of opinion between many or most of the Boers and the Cape Government on such a question as the substitution of the new magistrates for the old ones; but the difference was simply that which will always arise between the Government and a conservative or interested part of the population when the former introduces new and improved machinery into the State. We can all sympathise with the feelings of the Boers on this occasion, all of us at any rate who have a love for old names and old things; but what they experienced then is what we have all experienced alike in matters of the State and matters of the parish. I felt a disagreeable shock myself

when I found that the old town-crier with his hand-bell had been abolished in the small burgh where I was bred. But I admitted that the place had grown too large for his jurisdiction, and did not, like my grandmother, suspect any malice on the part of the new burgh commissioners. The Dutch colonist, it is true, is intensely conservative in his ways, and any change is more vexatious coming from the hand of a foreign governor. It was vexatious to lose the familiar old *hecmraad* that they had been accustomed to all their lives, and have him turned into a strange *urederechter* or justice of the peace, even if he was the same man. All this may be readily granted, but it is a very different thing to represent this change, and that of the official language as a substantial grievance which led to the great trek. There is one fact alone which goes a long way to discredit such a view. These changes, as far as they were felt as grievances, were felt by every part of the Colony alike, while ninety-eight per cent. of the Boers who made the great trek, from 1836 to 1839, came from the old district of Graaff-Reinet alone. There can be no clearer evidence that the troubles which caused that trek lay altogether in that frontier district. Indeed these administrative changes do not seem to have seriously disturbed the good relations which existed generally between the British authorities at the Cape and the mass of the Dutch colonists. The general

reputation of the British rule for justice, and the security it gave to all legitimate interests, was too well established to be much affected by such differences, or by those which occasionally occurred at this time on the question of farm tenures.

The Governor of Cape Colony during these important events was Lord Charles Henry Somerset, who held office for the unusual term of twelve years, from 1814 to 1826. He was a member of the great Beaufort family, with connections high and powerful enough to obtain a practically free hand for him in the government of the Colony. He was an able man, of clear, prompt judgment, almost pouncing upon the thing he took in hand and straightening it out with a fine practical instinct for the immediate needs of the occasion. A few months after his arrival he set up a Government farm at the Boschberg for provisioning the troops on the eastern frontier, and built granaries for storing grain purchased from the farmers, a great boon to the latter, saving transport and securing a steady market for them. After a look at the old experimental farm at Groote Post, managed in an easy way by a Board of Directors, he took it over into his own hands, imported a number of the best blood horses from England at his own expense, and improved the colonial breed so much that a considerable export trade to India and the Mauritius was the result. He was willing to help

philanthropic work also when it did not stand in his way. He founded the Leper Asylum, and as a respectable British Governor, well aware of the existence of Wilberforce and the people at Surrey Chapel and Tottenham Court Road, not to speak of Henry Brougham and other Whig friends of humanity, he gave a discriminating patronage to missions, granted 7,000 more acres to the Moravian Brethren at Genadenthal (who never meddled with politics), and gave them another site at Enon, their first station in the frontier district. Many mission stations indeed, both within the Colony and without, were founded under his régime, for the evangelical and missionary spirit was rising ever higher in Britain in those days, and would not be denied.

But at heart Lord Charles had no great opinion of the utility of mission stations, within the Colony at least, and set more value on the economical benefit to be got by dispersing the natives in the service of the Boers, than by bringing them under the influences of Christianity.¹ He even refused to allow the Wesleyan missionary, Barnabas Shaw, who arrived in Africa in 1816, to labour amongst the coloured people in the Cape district, on the pretext that it was contrary to the Dutch laws of 1804, and that the feeling of the slaveholders was against it.² In short, Lord

¹ See the "Journal of Missionary Anderson," quoted by Philip, vol. ii. p. 62.

² See Barnabas Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, p. 59.

Charles was a man of practical temper in the matter of progress and reforms, in many ways not unequal to the great task he had undertaken, but incapable of appreciating any ideals of civilisation other than those already fixed and visible to his eyes. Between what was visionary in such things and what was a necessary element in the progress of humanity he could not well distinguish.

As might be expected, therefore, his relations with the London Missionary Society, which was the special champion of the Hottentot race within the Colony, were always somewhat strained. Perhaps he resented the influence which this Society, and in particular its energetic chief, Dr. Philip, were able, through their relations with Fowell-Buxton, Wilberforce, and other leaders of the philanthropic societies, to exercise in colonial affairs. On Bethelsdorp particularly his hand was heavy in the way of restrictions and requisitions, and he seems to have received mostly in contemptuous silence the complaints which the missionaries there made with regard to his landdrost's exactions.¹

The visit which he made in 1817 to the London Society's mission at the Kat River, under Mr. Williams, seems a fair specimen of the Colonial Government's attitude at this time towards those

¹ See the official correspondence in Philip, vol. ii., pp. 405-435.

asylums for the natives. Poor Williams, an honest illiterate sort of man, Dr. Theal says (whom I quote a little fearfully), had not been many months at the station, and everything being new to him in that Kaffir country, had, without knowing it, given shelter to six runaway Hottentots at his settlement. His Lordship, not wishing to overwhelm the poor man, who had been useful in the negotiations with Gaika, gave him a gentlemanlike rebuke ; but our old friend, Colonel Cuyler, the landdrost of Uitenhage, told him in his hectoring way that "he had a damned deal better be somewhere else." Tom Sheridan, the eldest son of the famous orator, happened to be of the Governor's party—he was then Colonial Paymaster at the Cape—and having a soft Irish heart, or mindful perhaps of Charles Fox and his father's old battles, for all that was weak or oppressed, or "agin the Government," shook hands with Williams and wished him every success. "He is a gentleman I know nothing of," writes Williams, "but it did me good to think they were not all against me."

There were some exceptions, but I think the feeling of the average British officer on the frontier towards Kaffirs and Hottentots was much the same as that of the Boers, and is fairly enough represented by what they said to Williams when he was passing the frontier posts on his way to the Kat River, "after they had sent a good lot of them to hell, it would be

time to go and preach salvation to them, and not before.”¹ We must remember that Mr. Fowell-Buxton, lecturing at Exeter Hall on the analogy between the African native and the savage Briton in Cæsar’s time, and the British subaltern or major on the Kaffir frontier, are two very different and extreme specimens of the British mind in such matters.

When Williams died in 1818 Lord Somerset prohibited a successor proceeding to the Kat River station, and partly in this way, partly by direct measures, secured the dispersion of the Ghonaquas there amongst the Boers of Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam. He withdrew also the London Society’s mission stations at Hephzibah and Troverberg (modern Colesberg) as giving rise to disputes with the farmers over the possession of Bushmen children.

Lord Charles Somerset, like many of the British Governors and Generals commanding in the colonies to-day, had a more difficult position to hold than the people at home were aware of, and with all the support that high connections could give him, he had no bed of roses as Governor of Cape Colony. With the British immigration of 1820 a large number of colonists, accustomed to representative government and a free criticism of their rulers, had been settled in the country. When the bad times came, many of

¹ Philip, vol. ii. p. 165.

these were inclined to find fault with the Colonial Government, to complain of its arrangements, to demand any locations which their fancy pitched upon, as if land were as plentiful in Albany and as unclaimed as in the Great Karroo. Their instincts, of course, led them at once to propose public meetings at Grahamstown with the view of ventilating their grievances. The time, it must be admitted, was not an opportune one for such fine constitutional usages. In 1822 the Colony, with some 6,000 British settlers, totally ignorant of the country, some 40,000 Dutch, and almost twice that number of slaves and Hottentots, was in no way ripe for self-government. A few discontented British might raise all that was unruly in the Dutch population. There was only one way then, and by his Proclamation of May 24th, 1822, Lord Charles declared that "public meetings for the discussion of public measures, and political subjects" were "contrary to the law and usage of this place," and were prohibited accordingly. The Briton's birthright was taken away.

More dangerous still, what might be called a Radical Opposition party had been formed at Cape-town. Thither Thomas Pringle, formerly of the Scotch location at the Baviaans' River, had gone, and in company with another ingenuous Scotch University youth, Fairbairn by name, had started a magazine, their heads full of all the Liberal and humanitarian

ideas of that time, diffusion of economical and political knowledge amongst the people, lectures on chemistry and botany, societies for discussion and debate, with strong philanthropic views, of course, on the subject of the native races. Worse still, the two had, as editors, got command of the only newspaper (except the drowsy official *Gazette*) published in the Colony. Some very reputable society also gathered round them, amongst others Dr. Philip, the Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, George Thompson, W. T. Blair, of the East India Company's Civil Service, and Benjamin Moodie. Even some of the Cape Dutch, Sir John Truter and advocate Cloete, joined their Literary Society, being in sympathy with their constitutional ideals, and the question of emancipation being still, to all appearance, a remote one.

The first number of the magazine, the *South African Journal*, published in March 1824, commenced auspiciously with an essay from Mr. Fairbairn on the influence of the general diffusion of knowledge "in checking the abuses of despotic power," and with some verses of Pringle upon the "Suppression of a Constitutional Government in Spain." Excellent topics in a colony where the proclamation against public meetings had been so lately promulgated! The second number contained an article on the "Prospects of the English Emigrants in South Africa," in which, amongst the causes of their

distress, were mentioned, "an arbitrary system of government, and its natural consequences—abuse of power by local functionaries, monopolies, &c.," and "the vacillating and inefficient system pursued in regard to the Kaffirs."

The journal was highly approved of by Mr. Henry Brougham at home, to whom it was duly sent by Pringle. One can understand, too, a certain feeling of complacency amongst some official persons, both Dutch and English, who may at times have been handled rather summarily by that intelligent autocrat, the Governor. But the reader is perhaps in a position to consider for himself how far representative government and free Opposition criticism at that period were consistent with the existence of a British Governor at Capetown ; or with that of Pringle himself and his British journalism ; or with that of Pringle's father and brother on the forfeited lands of the Bezuidenhouts ; or with the editor's lofty philanthropic theories in favour of the native races. Not one of those things could have existed at that period along with a free poll of the white voters in Cape Colony, except in so far as the *vis major* of the British Empire supported them against the wishes of the majority.

The end of the quarrel was that the Governor established a censorship of the magazine and the newspaper, when both the editors and Greig, the

publisher, announced that they would discontinue their publications rather than compromise their "birthright as British subjects." Lord Charles made some efforts to compromise the matter quietly, but Pringle stood haughtily on his rights, and the quarrel finally became one *à l'outrance*, the Governor exerting all his influence to discountenance Pringle's schemes, especially his educational academy, and Pringle proclaiming to the world that a "Reign of Terror" existed at the Cape. At last Pringle concluded he had better leave the Colony, and, returning to England in 1826, was soon after made secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. There he laboured "unweariedly" along with Zachary Macaulay, Fowell-Buxton and others of that set at the great ideal of equal rights for the black races, contributing tales of the "Wrongs of Amakosa," and verses on expatriated Kaffirs, more than ever in the Campbell style, even to the Christmas Annuals of that day.¹ He died in December 1834, having lived to see his hopes fulfilled. He was somewhat of a flaring lamp and soon burnt out, but he shone in a great darkness and helps wonderfully to light it up for us.

It is evident, however, that the Colony was approaching a condition when it could no longer be satisfactorily ruled by a Governor's Proclamations. It is true that as far as possible the lines of legisla-

¹ See *Friendship's Offering* (which he edited) for 1833.

tion were laid down by special Acts of Parliament in Great Britain, or orders in council, and also that the Governor's Proclamations had eventually to be approved and confirmed by the Secretary for the Colonies. But the fact that the members of the Court of Justice, even the Chief Justice himself, were dependent on the Governor's favour for their appointment to the other civil situation which they might hold, and were removable at his pleasure, and also the fact that the Governor himself constituted the first Court of Appeal both in civil and criminal cases, put excessive power into the hands of one man. The powers of the Fiscal, too, an officer who was of course much under the influence of the Governor, were unusually extensive and rather incompatible with modern views of good government. He was public prosecutor and head of the police. "He may bring forward charges tyrannically," writes Wilberforce Bird, a very competent authority, "or withhold them corruptly. He may tease one part of the society by little vexatious police regulations, and indulge another part in less venial acts." But Bird admits that there is "no instance on record in which any one (of the Fiscals) has been convicted of undue partiality, or of abuse of power."¹ I do not quite like the formal

¹ *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, p. 18. Bird was a cautious, moderate, statistical sort of writer, and had been for many years a civil servant at the Cape.

style of that testimony, but I think it is only Bird's stiff, official manner.

The government of the Colony was certainly of an autocratic type, but it was, as even Dr. Theal admits, in the hands of honourable men, and it was an autocracy quite free from corruption and tempered always by the certainty that any real case of mal-administration or injustice would be investigated by the Home Government and surely punished.

In ordinary circumstances freedom of speech is the best guarantee we can have of good government, but it does not follow that it always secures honest and pure government. It may be quite otherwise in some communities. Under Lord Charles the citizens of Capetown had to suppress their disapproval of the Government's measures or grumble them out only in the privacy of the domestic circle, but the Government itself was honest and pure. I am always surprised that Dr. Theal's industry finds so little in the way of public scandal against British governors and officials. What would he not have given for even a small matter like our rations scandal, or the mere suspicion of a Yukon deal? It would be meat and drink to him. Under the New Americanism also, the citizens of New York may come out into the streets and shout aloud, if they like, against the rule of Boss Croker, but they are in the grasp of the machine and of a master-hand, before whose feats Sir George's

little stretches of authority and timid essayings seem contemptible, almost a kind of virtuous restraint. Even the great dailies that once harried Tweed have become silent. All the same the American people usually know what they want and contrive to get it. The management of our modern great cities, those vast agglomerations from every nationality, has become a special kind of problem which is not quite the same thing as the administration of a small town in Cape Cod or the farming districts of Wisconsin. Perhaps they even act in some measure as depurating sinks to help the latter. There may be a good deal in Mr. Croker's own view that the people of New York accept his rule as the only alternative to that of Sectarians, Prohibitionists and Faddists, which would be too much for ordinary human nature. At least that is how I read one of his harangues, which claims that his victory at the polls is a victory for "the plain people."

The Boers of the frontier, at any rate, had no fault to find with Lord Charles Somerset. His Border policy was designed largely with a view to meet their wants and desires. It fell to him, it is true, to suppress the Bezuidenhout rebellion (1815), which he did with a firm hand, as we have seen ; he transferred, too, some of the most turbulent Bruintjes Hoogte men who had been out in that affair, to the Nieuwveld Mountains on the northern frontier, where they might expand to

their hearts' content with nothing but feeble and unorganised bands of Bushmen to oppose them. He disbanded the hated Hottentot corps on the grounds that it took "not only the men but their women also from the service of the farmers." He applied the *opgaaf*, or tax, to Hottentots residing at mission stations in so severe a manner, as practically to force any Hottentots who had not been fortunate or prosperous to choose between the prison and service with the Boers. His landdrosts also were encouraged in a line of conduct towards the mission stations which was always strict, often severe, and occasionally quite arbitrary. The result was that while the Radical party and the emigrants were sending complaints and petitions against the Governor, the Boers of the frontier were presenting testimonials and addresses in support of him. So much progress, at any rate, had the titular author of the execution of the Slachter's Nek rebels made in their favour.

What pleased them most, no doubt, was the encouragement he gave to their territorial expansion, and particularly the prospect he opened up for them of gaining possession of the long coveted lands of the Kaffir in the Koonap valley.

Since 1811, when Sir John Cradock had expelled the Kaffirs from the Zuurveld, the Fish River had been the real as well as nominal boundary between the Colony and the Kaffirs. In 1817 Lord Charles

took the frontier business in hand, and proceeding with a strong guard to the Kat Kiver summoned the chief Gaika to an interview. The barbaric chief seems no longer to have been what he was when Dr. Vanderkemp first saw him eighteen years before at the same place, a proud and majestic figure, receiving the white man's overtures somewhat condescendingly. That long experience of the growing and irresistible power of the race that was pressing on his frontier had evidently cowed him, and he came to meet the British Governor in fear and trembling, only partly reassured by the presence of the missionary Williams. Indeed he seems hardly to have known what to make of the civilisation that confronted him. On the one hand there were its missionaries, the Vanderkemps and Reads, who came to him with messages of peace and good-will on earth amongst men, and on the other hand there were the Boers, who called themselves *Christen Mensche* and shot his Kaffirs, offensive and inoffensive, plunderers or peace envoys, like dogs; and there were the British authorities who, as he afterwards said, "oppressed while they protected him." So when his Lordship was exacting conditions and laying down the strictest law of reprisals, to all of which Gaika could do nothing but agree, as far as his tribe was concerned, the savage chief who knew very well, below all questions of depredations and reprisals, who were the real aggressors, who first

massacred the Imidange years ago, burst out abruptly into some questions which Williams seems to think irrelevant. "What is the missionary come into this land for?" His Lordship answered, "To teach you the Word of God."—"Who has sent him?" asked the chief. The Governor replied that Williams had been sent by the friends of Christianity over the world, through the medium of the English Government; and that therefore he (the Governor) was bound to protect him. Gaika, not having got to his point yet, then asked his Excellency, "how he should understand the Word," a question which quite non-plussed his Excellency, who abandoned the discussion at this stage.

Gaika indeed seems to have done his best, as far as his power went, to keep faith with the Government, but his authority at this time was much weakened amongst his countrymen, the recent events in the Zuurveld not being of a kind to set his prudent policy of peace at any price in a favourable light with them. A prophet, too, had arisen amongst the Amakosa, a warrior-priest, who had acquired even more influence amongst the western Kaffirs than their hereditary chiefs, and now threw that influence wholly into the scale against Gaika as a pusillanimous ruler, who was afraid to maintain the rights of his race.

Makana, according to general testimony, was a man of high intellect and commanding character. He had frequented Dr. Vanderkemp's mission at Bethelsdorp,

and had received from him and from the Missionary Vanderlingen some idea of Christianity, which he had assimilated with some vague Kaffir notions of his own regarding the government of the universe. In his rôle of prophet he was accustomed to address his people in high mysterious harangues, as they seemed to Read and other missionaries, not the best of interpreters in such cases ; he even at times attempted to perform miracles, and was no more abashed than Mohammed when they failed. He had a profound sense of the danger to his race from the encroaching civilisation of the white man, more so perhaps than events have justified, owing to the humane policy of the British Government. Pringle, who came out to Africa shortly after Makana's rising, and knew his story well, has interpreted his sentiments for us in a poem, which he calls *Makana's Gathering* :

Wake ! Amakosa, wake !
And arm yourselves for war.

Hark ! 'tis Uhlanga's voice
From Debe's mountain caves !
He calls on you to make your choice—
To conquer or be slaves :
To meet proud Amanglezi's guns,
And fight like warriors nobly born ;
Or like Umlawu's feeble sons,¹
Become the foeman's scorn.

To Makana the policy of Gaika seemed both

¹ The Hottentot race.

cowardly and futile,¹ and he exerted all his influence to unite the different Kosa clans in an attempt to break the power of the wily old chief. For a time the attempt was successful. In the great fight of Amalinde, in 1818, Gaika's warriors were completely routed by Makana's strategy, and he was only saved from destruction by the interference of the British Governor, who sent troops to his aid. The Kosa patriots under Ndlambe and Makana then invaded the district of Albany, their old Zuurveld home, and made an assault on Grahamstown. The assault was repelled by the troops stationed there, and a large force of burghers and soldiers was soon afterwards assembled for a punitive expedition into Kaffirland. The invading clans were driven to the Kei with great loss of life and cattle. Makana gave himself up to the government in order to prevent his people being hunted into starvation, and was drowned some time afterwards in an attempt to escape from his prison at Robben Island. That was the end of the great attempt he had organised to turn the tide of the white man's invasion of Kaffir territory. His memory, like that of British Arthur and German Barbarossa, was perpetuated amongst his people by a tradition that he

¹ "Gaika shall never rule over the followers of those who think him a woman," was the contemptuous speech of one of Makana's lieutenants to the British commandant.

would again appear, in the hour of need, to lead them to victory, and it was not till 1873, Theal says, that his mats and ornaments were sorrowfully buried, according to custom, by his countrymen.

It was not the policy of the British authorities at this time to alarm the Kaffir by occupying his territory at once, but Lord Charles judged it was a good opportunity for pushing him further back. The need also of a more assured frontier than that afforded by the jungles of the Fish River seems to have been felt by the military authorities. The chiefs were not always able, even if they were willing, entirely to repress the plundering instincts of their followers, nor was the government able to prevent the more lawless of the farmers from crossing the boundary to drive an illicit trade in cattle. The British Governor therefore hit upon the expedient of creating a neutral belt of territory between the colonist and the Kaffir. He demanded from Gaika the cession of the land between the Fish River and the Keiskamma, including that region of the Kat and Koonap rivers on which the Boers had long had an eye. Gaika was in no position to refuse, and besides, his tribe had but lately owed its existence to the British Governor's intervention. But he requested that his favourite kraal at the head waters of the Tyumie, the most fertile valley in Kaffirland, should be left to him. The cession seems to have

been made on the understanding that the territory was to remain unoccupied. Military outposts and patrols were established to repress alike the aggressions of the Boer and the thieving habits of the Kaffir. The extra expenditure for the defence of the frontier often fell heavy on the British Treasury, amounting to about £100,000, and latterly £300,000 a year, with an additional half-million thrown in when war broke out. "Every acre of ground in Cape Colony," writes Mr. Boyce (*Notes on South Africa*), "has already been paid for by the British Treasury at a rate ten times its actual value."

It was unfortunate that the neutrality of the ceded territory was hardly long enough respected by the Colonial Government to convince the Kaffirs that the arrangement had been made in good faith. In 1820 Lord Charles Somerset was absent on leave, and the acting-Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, with the consent of Gaika, allowed a number of the officers and men of the Royal African Corps, as well as some Scotch settlers under Mr. B. Moodie, to occupy the southern part of it. On the other hand Lord Charles Somerset soon after his return permitted Gaika's son, Makoma, to re-occupy the valley of the Kat River, and in 1825 he at last rewarded the fidelity of the frontier Boers by extending the boundary of the Colony to the Koonap River, and throwing open that part of the neutral or ceded territory for them alone, on the

ground that they were best accustomed to border warfare. More than a hundred Boer families at once passed over the old frontier and took up the land "unto the Koonap." The Radical opposition and the "friends of humanity," however, protested, and Earl Bathurst was obliged to write Lord Charles Somerset, disapproving of his action as at least an undesirable extension of slavery. The Boers, therefore, who had not actually set up house there, were recalled; the rest of them, about fifty families, were allowed to remain, on condition of not employing slave labour. But the important question on the eastern frontier was not that of slave labour, but of raids, reprisals, and territorial rights, and with the Boers at the Koonap, and Makoma at the Kat, some twelve or fifteen miles intervening, the prospects of tranquillity on the frontier were not very bright.

Lord Somerset's proceedings in this and other matters had aroused a strong feeling against him in certain circles at home. Henry Brougham, that friend of humanity, especially when oppressed by Tories, had actually undertaken to impeach him, and Earl Bathurst in 1826 was obliged to recall him "to give explanations." A change of ministry took place soon after the arrival of Lord Charles, which induced him to send in his resignation, and the proposed impeachment, by general consent, fell to the ground. His twelve years' rule had been on the whole

a strong, consistent and intelligent administration. He had had three great ends in view, all of which he pursued with vigour and success. The first was the establishment of the British supremacy on a solid basis of laws, institutions, and education ; the second was the satisfaction of the economical needs of the Boers on the northern and the eastern frontier as regards both land and cheap native service ; and the third was the industrial development of the Colony. With regard to that other great question which confronted every Governor at the Cape, the condition of the slaves and native races, his policy went little farther than securing them as far as he could from personal violence, and protecting them in the enjoyment of rights, which are those of serfs. He could not get over the fact that anything more, anything in the direction of improving their legal status, seemed at that time incompatible with the economical needs, and with the universal sentiment of a community which depended on cheap native labour. In this respect the policy of the British Governors had been the same throughout since Lord Caledon's Proclamation of 1809. Any protective legislation which really differed from that in its principle or aims came from another source altogether, from the influence, namely, which the great philanthropic and missionary societies had now begun to exercise on the Government at home.

XIII

The Philanthropic Societies in Great Britain—The Heroic Age of Evangelical Work and Literature—Protective Legislation for the Slaves—The Dutch Evangelical Circle at the Cape—Dr. John Philip and his *Researches in South Africa*—The Emancipation of the Hottentot Race—An Old-time Speech at Surrey Chapel.

THE great missionary and philanthropic societies in England constituted the real moving force behind all the ameliorative legislation on behalf of the slaves and native races in South Africa. With the commencement of the nineteenth century there was an extraordinary growth of missionary enterprise and humanitarian enthusiasm in Great Britain. Before that, most of the great work in this field had been done by Catholicism, by Jesuit Fathers and the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide* in the Indies, in Brazil and Canada. But in the first quarter of the century England became alive with societies, various in their denomination and field of work, but all of a philanthropic and evangelical character, and most of them specially bent on the extension of Christianity to the

heathen and of the benefits which should accompany it. The Protestant Missionary stations seemed to cover the earth with a rush. The great Parisian paper of those days, the *Débats*, was moved to take special notice of this new Protestant activity, and was inclined to look somewhat suspiciously on it, divining it to be a subtle political movement of the *perfide Albion*. Protestant Germany, Denmark, and especially Holland, had their share in the work, but they were neither wealthy enough, nor sufficiently united to produce that almost national current of enthusiasm which flowed over the British Isles from London to Aberdeen and Ulster. Nor were they perhaps, as Pastor Stracke, corresponding member in East Friesland, frankly confesses to the Directors of the London Missionary Society, quite so exalted in their devotion to the cause.¹

The backbone of the movement lay in the Non-conformist clergy and the evangelical section of the Church of England, but it was strongly supported

¹ "They ('the German brethren') confess before the Lord, with unfeigned tears, that they are not so devoted to Him with their whole heart as they perceive you, dear brethren, are. . . . And, finally, to many persons in Germany, new (missionary) institutions seemed to be superfluous, or at least that they were precluded by the incomparable institution of the Moravian Brethren, and that at Halle, which may and ought to be considered as the parent of all similar societies which have arisen in the course of the past century."—Pastor Stracke in the *Missionary Magazine*, 1801, p. 211.

by many eminent men and politicians of that time like Sir James Mackintosh, Wilberforce, Henry Brougham, Fowell-Buxton, Hon. Charles Grant, Spring Rice, and others. Not a little, indeed, of the moral and intellectual energy of the British people was taking this road in these days. That line, or Pusey and Newman's, with a corresponding interest in Apostolical Succession and Orders, seems to have been the alternative for the actively religious. I do not know that in every case the philanthropic zeal displayed was quite disinterested. The movement was a powerful one which drew men of all kinds into it, ambitious orators and politicians as well as devout evangelicals. But to many of them, men like William Wilberforce and Zachary Macaulay, the work of the *African Institution*, or the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, or the *London Missionary Society*, or the *Baptist Missionary Society*, or the *Church Missionary Society*, or the *Wesleyan, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ulster Societies*, was as the breath of life and the best part of their religion.

The ordinary anniversary meetings of the larger societies were more like a great political gathering of our time than anything else, in their numbers and enthusiasm. The reader may imagine the scene at Freemason's, or Exeter Hall, or Surrey Chapel, or Tottenham Court Road on these occasions. Anything from two to four thousand people present, mostly of

strict evangelical type ; on the platform eminent divines without number, the Rev. Rowland Hill of the Church of England, the Rev. Jabez Bunting of the Wesleyans, the Rev. John Eyre of Hackney, the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw of Glasgow, and the Rev. Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing, with others not less well known in their day ; for laymen Wilberforce, Fowell-Buxton, Zachary Macaulay, Mr. Nisbet, the celebrated bookseller of Berners Street, Mr. Whitmore of the Bank of England ; also Parliamentary hands like Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Spring Rice and the Hon. Charles Grant (afterwards as Lord Glenelg and Colonial Secretary wielding a decisive influence at a critical juncture in South African affairs) ; not unfrequently also Henry Brougham with his impetuous oratory, poor enough to read now, but of singular effect at the time ; and Lord Calthorpe or Lord Gambier in the chair. The composition of the meeting varied a little according as it was the *African Institution* or the *London Missionary Society*, but nearly all I have mentioned were likely to be present at both. They were not only a formidable body of men in themselves, but they had nearly the whole of the evangelical and nonconformist middle-classes at their back, with votes not as yet swamped by Mr. Gladstone's franchise.

Amongst these institutions the London Missionary Society, as one of the largest and least denominational

in its character,¹ played an important part in collecting and distributing information, particularly regarding South Africa, and in furnishing a strong centre for the expression of opinion in evangelical circles.

The powerful evangelical literature of that time also, with Cowper at its head, helped not a little to fan the flame of missionary zeal. Wilberforce's *Practical View of the Religion of Professed Christians* and Clarkson's pamphlets sold by the thousands, as a popular novel does now. Much of the religious and a good deal even of the popular poetry of the day, from Hannah More and Montgomery to the verses of Serena, Leonora, and Alzira in the evangelical magazines, turned its harp for the cause of missions and of the oppressed negro, though I think Heber bore away the bell with his famous *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*,² the Dissenting Muse, somehow, rarely being of first-rate quality.

After the suppression of the Ocean Slave-Trade in 1807, the attention of the Societies, as far as political work was concerned, was chiefly directed to the improvement of the condition of the slave population in the British Colonies. Their influence is marked by

¹ It had a special support from the Independent Church, but for many years, at least, it was a general Protestant Society and had clergymen of all denominations amongst its members.

² Contributed to the *Evangelical Magazine* in 1822.

a succession of protective enactments in South Africa which regulated ever more strictly the master's control of his slaves. In 1816 a register of slaves and of slave births was opened in each district for the inspection of the landdrost. No more Dirks to be carried out in the night-time and no questions asked ; no more black things to be baked in ovens by angry Boer matrons ! The grandfather of Olive Schreiner's tale must have been very indignant. But that was only the beginning. In 1823 a new series of enactments appeared ; no slave to do labour except of necessity on the Sabbath day ; slave husband and wife not to be sold apart, nor children under ten to be separated from them ; slaves might acquire property of their own by any honest means ; they should not labour in the field more than ten hours a day in winter and twelve in summer, except in ploughing or harvesting, when they should receive payment for the extra hours ; in towns and villages slave children should be sent to school at least three days in each week ; not more than twenty-five cuts with a rod should be inflicted on a slave, and punishment should not be repeated within twenty-four hours. In 1826 assistant "protectors" of slaves were appointed in the country districts to see that the regulations were properly carried out. It was all very proper, of course, and as much needed in the interests of the masters themselves as of the slaves ; some

consciousness of that, one can see, was growing amongst Dutch farmers of the better sort. But if in the most civilised and settled communities of our time philanthropic legislation of this kind, the enactments regarding seamen's food and accommodation on board ship, for example, has generally been received at first with much shaking of heads and mutterings about the encouragement given to a class already hard enough to keep in order, you can imagine what masters of the Bezuidenhout type would feel. Even the better class of them might be irritated, as Dr. Theal says they were, at having to give as a right what they formerly accorded as a grace and got gratitude for.

It must not be forgotten, however, that there was also a Dutch evangelical circle at the Cape, and even a certain number of the Boers who were in sympathy with the aims of the missionaries, and gave them all the assistance they could. Dr. Vanderkemp on his arrival at Capetown had found a small band of "serious people," Vanderpoels, Vandersandes, Heysses, and, most prominent amongst them, pious women like Mrs. Smit, and widow Moller, who lent their houses for slave meetings, and formed themselves into a South African Society, to which the wealthy Mrs. Moller contributed 15,000 guilders, to help the London missionaries in their labours. In 1801 they numbered over two hundred, and were

giving instruction in an unofficial sort of way to nineteen hundred heathen in Capetown, Stellenbosch, Paarl, and the neighbouring districts. But they were a small and uninfluential party even amongst their own countrymen. Dr. Theal hardly notices them, and they were never able to stir the Dutch Reformed Church into any official action. The Rev. Mr. Vos, of Roodezand, was the only active labourer, says Read, in the mission field.¹ In 1817, when the Rev. Mr. Thom, who was then a missionary of the London Society, applied for leave to build a mission chapel for slaves at Capetown, the Governor (Lord Charles Somerset) referred his application to the Dutch Reformed Church. That body accordingly met to consider the subject, but broke up without coming to an agreement.² In the same magazine Mr. Bakker, the London Society's missionary at Stellenbosch, complains that he is not allowed to baptize the coloured converts, or administer the Sacrament to them. But in spite of official lethargy on the part of the Dutch Reformed Church, owing to the prejudices of the majority of its adherents, there was always a number of Good Samaritans amongst the Dutch, although their associations for missionary

¹ The best account of the Dutch Evangelical circles and their work is in the *Missionary Magazine* for 1801, pp. 84, 165, 213, 258, 298.

² *Missionary Register*, 1818, p. 274.

work had generally to fall back on the ever-ready London Society for support.¹

In England the tide of philanthropy was rising steadily, and its force at this time was materially increased by a man whose name is now scarcely known, except to students of South African history. Dr. John Philip, once minister of the Independent Church at Aberdeen, had come out to the Cape in 1819 as superintendent of the London Missionary Society's work in that quarter. He was a Scotchman, the son of a Kirkcaldy weaver, but had been well educated at the Hoxton Academy in Shoreditch, then a celebrated seminary for Nonconformist clergymen. He was a man of indefatigable energy, eloquent in speech, and with an unquenchable enthusiasm and belief in his mission which feared nothing. The idea which inspired Philip's work was the establishment of legal equality as far as possible between the white and the coloured races. He held that it was impossible to educate or civilise the native races effectually, as long as they were kept under legal disabilities which degraded them and left them to a great extent at the mercy of Boer magistrates. On this point his views were those of the missionaries generally, but his superior ability and energy in advocating them gave the work of the London Missionary Society special political import-

See *Missionary Register*, 1833, p. 15.

ance. There were of course differences of opinion amongst them, and there was in particular a difference between their attitude and that of the pastors of the State Church, even where the latter were British, generally Scotch, by birth. Dr. George Thom, for example, whose sphere of work lay in the civilised region of Caledon and Capetown, under the very eye of the Governor, admitted that some of the Dutch farmers might occasionally be cruel to their slaves and Hottentots, while missionaries like Stephen Kay and James Read, whose experience had been in the Eastern provinces amongst the frontier Boers, spoke more decisively on the subject. In 1822 Dr Thom wrote to the editors of the *Missionary Register*,¹ as if he saw nothing in the status of the Hottentots which required improvement. "They are not held in subjection," he writes. "They are a free people ; but must be in some employment, or possess land, or hire themselves to others." The Doctor does not add the fourth alternative, to be locked up in the jail and treated as vagabonds, which after all sounds like a considerable limitation on a "free people." When the Doctor says, further, that "they cannot be punished, as a slave ; nor ill-used, such as by beating," &c., he may be representing their condition quite fairly as he sees it at Caledon, fifty miles from Capetown ; but he evidently knows

¹ See January number.

little of what goes on in distant Uitenhage and Graaff-Reinet. How should he, 600 miles away, in a country where communication was casual and infrequent?

It was Dr. Philip, the Las Casas of South Africa, Pringle calls him, who first brought the condition of the Hottentot, as distinguished from that of the slave, clearly before his countrymen at home. In 1826 he visited Great Britain, and showed his usual energy in interviewing influential M.P.'s and heads of departments, and in making speeches at the meetings of the various philanthropic societies throughout the country, from the *African Institution* to the *Sunderland School Union*.

While in England Dr. Philip also published a work, *Researches in South Africa*, which is the most complete statement of the missionary's case in that region ever made public. Dr. Philip's book goes over a great deal of ground, and includes some historical and debateable matter, as well as the facts which came within his own experience as the superintendent of the London Missionary Society in South Africa. In the historical controversial part of his book he presents his case, just as Dr. Theal does his, without any real attempt to appreciate the needs, or difficulties, or justifications of the other side. But then we must remember he is not properly a historian or economist, calmly weighing both sides, but a mis-

sionary, advocating the cause of the black race. The *Researches in South Africa*, however, is of considerable value, as embodying the extensive experience of the author regarding missionary methods, special accounts of particular missions, casual glances and observations at native manners and customs, interviews with well-known persons of that time, doings and sayings of Hottentot Captain Boezak or Bushman chief Uithalder, and a mass of similar information, all chosen no doubt to represent and illustrate the plaintiff's case mainly, but none the less valuable to the true historian, and quite reliable where the writer gives his own experience. Dr. Philip, too, has the good habit of quoting directly the original records, the journals and letters of other missionaries, on which his views are based. But his book is of particular value, as showing the actual working, in the eastern districts at least, of the legislation of 1809 and 1812 regarding Hottentots. The Appendix alone, with the official correspondence of Bethelsdorp and Theopolis, will show the reader, by means of authentic documents, a side of this subject which Dr. Theal passes over in silence.¹

In a book, however, which is practically filled with cases of injustice to the Hottentots drawn from

¹ Dr. Theal says of Dr. Philip's book, "For historical purposes its only value is the exposition of the views of its author with regard to the colonists and coloured races."

various sources, sometimes from his own observation, sometimes from documentary evidence or the reports of friends, it is not easy to escape a single doubtful or mistaken case. Amongst the many cases Dr. Philip gives there was at least one implicating Mr. Mackay, the landdrost of Somerset, in which he seems to have been mistaken. It looks a curious affair as it stands in Theal's page (chap. xxxv., p. 348) without any hint of the details, a curious affair for a devout and sincere man to figure in. But we must bear in mind that this case was no simple tale of inhumanity in the use of the sjambok, but a rather complicated question of the law of contract,¹ and that it was explicitly stated in Philip's book as given not on his own authority, but that of an "intelligent and respectable friend." The friend was Thomas Pringle (who accepted full responsibility for the statements), and no sane man will ever believe that the author of *African Sketches* was guilty of deliberate slander. Mr. Mackay, who had been a favourite with Lord Charles Somerset, sued Dr. Philip for libel and was granted damages to the extent of £200, the judges, English, and of the new independent class, declaring the account to be a "false and malicious libel." But at that time the feeling both of official circles in Capetown and of the farms was very strong against Philip, Pringle and the Radical party

¹ See the case in Philip, vol. i. p. 185.

as they called it, generally—the emancipation of the Hottentots from the pass and apprenticeship laws had just been effected. The Directors of the London Missionary Society after considering the case held that Dr. Philip “had been tried in the midst of local prejudice and without benefit of jury,” and declared their “undisturbed and perfect confidence” in him.

But I must get back to my account of the work the missionary societies were doing at home. In 1826, the year Dr. Philip went to England, the evangelical magazines report a decided increase of public interest in missionary work, and from that time onwards to 1833, the date of the emancipation of the slaves, the tide was rising to its flood. In some denominations almost every congregation of importance in the country had its auxiliary branch working in connection with the headquarters in London, or Glasgow, or Edinburgh, and since 1823 the famous Anti-Slavery Society had been added to the list of Metropolitan institutions. Dr. Philip's book also, his speeches at missionary meetings and his personal contact with Fowell-Buxton and other leaders of evangelical circles, had evidently a considerable influence on the course of events. In July 1828, some months after the publication of the *Researches*, Fowell-Buxton, supported by Brougham, Mackintosh, and others, gave notice in the House of Commons of a motion to extend full legal rights to the Hottentot

race at the Cape by abolishing the pass and apprenticeship laws. But before the day of debate came, the Colonial Secretary, who did not have, in this case, the great West Indian and shipping interests to contend with, gave way without a discussion, and promised that an Order in Council should be issued in accordance with the demands of the reformers. By a curious coincidence, almost at the same time as Fowell-Buxton was bringing his motion before the House, the Colonial Government (Acting-Governor General Bourke) issued the Fiftieth Ordinance (17th July, 1828), which gave the Hottentots the same legal rights as the colonists. General Bourke was a very humane man, and we need not therefore suspect him of stealing the clothes of the reformers, but evidently the two years' work of Philip in England had made the measure a necessity.

There was much jubilation amongst the "saints and philanthropists," as they were called, over this victory. At the next anniversary of the London Missionary Society the eloquent Fowell-Buxton, after referring in complimentary terms to "the able and interesting work of my reverend friend, Dr. Philip," congratulated his hearers on the progress the cause was making in South Africa :

No longer than a year ago, the natives of British Africa were creatures without rights, without freedom, without hope—creatures who crouched before their lords, who presided over

their liberties and their lives. Now, how different is the picture ! . . . By a glorious act of justice has he (the Hottentot) been admitted into—has he been, I should rather say, re-instated in—the great Family of Man.

The orator then proceeded to remind his audience, wisely enough, of the work that lay before them to save this mass of undisciplined humanity suddenly set free, from lapsing into vice and indolence, and closed his address with the famous parallel between the African natives and the Britons of Cæsar's time, much in favour with the "friends of humanity" of that time.

I know not what will be the result of this measure ; but I will say, that if you have done something—more, much more, remains to be done. On you depends the solution of a problem of vast, of incalculable importance to humanity. It is this—"What will be the effect of liberty suddenly granted to an enslaved people ?" There will, be assured, be many to rejoice, if you fail—many to exult, if they are enabled to say, "You see what you have done ! You see now, that the Hottentots refuse to labour !" And how pleased will such men be, if they can exclaim, "Your boon of liberty was bad !" Persevere then, I beseech you ; not only for the sake of the natives of South Africa, but for the sake of the millions who have been and are trodden down under the iron heel of Oppression. Show your adversaries, prove to this country, what the Bible has done and can do. . . . I have said that we cannot now even conjecture what will be the effects of the regeneration of South Africa. It may seem visionary, it may appear idle, to indulge in such views as those in which I am not ashamed to indulge ; but I confess I do hope, and it is probable—at least it is in no way impossible—that a day will come when the now ignorant natives of South Africa shall be our rivals—the rivals even of Great Britain—in

science and in knowledge. . . . The classic historian tells us, that, some centuries ago, a Roman army headed by their most illustrious chief, visited a small and obscure island of the Atlantic, where the people were brutal and degraded, and as wild as the wildest beasts ; and the then chief orator of Rome, in writing to a friend, said, "There is a slave-ship arrived in the Tiber, laden with slaves from this island : " but he adds, "don't take one of them ; they are not fit for use." This very island was Britain ; and the slaves of Britain were then considered, by the Roman orator, as unworthy to be even the slaves of a Roman noble ! May not, then, a day arrive, when the sons of these wretched and degraded Africans will run with you the race of religion and morality, and even outstrip you in the glorious career ? But it is of little matter to inquire whether or not such an event will ever happen : one thing is certain—this country has now opened to Africa a way by which thousands may be, and will be, admitted to the enjoyment of greater privileges than this world could ever furnish—a channel of admission to the joys of eternal life ! ¹

A very fair specimen of that by-gone eloquence of "the saints," from one of the most eloquent amongst them, the wealthy and evangelical brewer, Mr. Buxton.

As to the strictly economical results of the Fiftieth Ordinance, we have the testimonies collected by Pringle (see pp. 266–268 of his *Narrative*), that though some petty disorders, as might be expected, prevailed for a time amongst some of the freed Hottentots, there was nothing serious in this way, and the great majority of them remained quiet and orderly, taking service just as before with the farmers.

¹ *Missionary Register*, June, 1829, p. 252.

An official authority even declares "that it was a matter of remark that crime amongst the coloured population had of late greatly diminished, not only in the number but in the character of the offences."

There was a great outcry raised against the Fiftieth Ordinance as long as it was only known to have the authority of General Bourke and the Colonial Government. Even at Capetown and the uniformly quiet district of Stellenbosch there were strong remonstrances addressed to the Government, and the ruin of the Colony was freely predicted for the want of labourers and herdsmen. The outcry came not only from the Boers, but from many of the British settlers also, who were just as eager to compel cheap native labour.

XIV

The Whigs and "Friends of Humanity" in Power—Emancipation of the Slaves—Dr. Theal on the Defects of the Measure—Attempts to Re-introduce a Vagrancy Act Defeated—Whites and Blacks.

THE Hottentot race had now been emancipated, but the much more difficult question of the emancipation of the slaves proper still remained. This meant direct confiscation of property, affected great interests at home, and involved economic changes in the West Indian colonies of a much more serious and extensive kind than anything that could happen in Cape Colony. But the Societies continued to work with the confidence and ardour of those who feel that the forces of the time are with them. In 1830 the Whigs, with Lord Grey at their head and Brougham and Charles Grant in the Cabinet, came into office. The "Friends of Humanity" were now in the saddle, and emancipation of the slaves was clearly within sight. The shrewd Graaff-Reineters, at any rate, those fathers of the Transvaal Boer, saw

how the tide was going, and understanding how vain it was to attempt to stop it by mere opposition, they tried to turn it. On this occasion they came forward with a proposal which certainly met with the approval of the Dutch colonists generally. It was to the effect that "after a date, to be fixed by the Government, all female children should be free at birth, in order that slavery might gradually cease." The proposal was coupled with some conditions for the removal of the restrictions placed on the masters by the new legislation: "no new legislation other than provisions for the severe punishment of actual ill-treatment should be imposed on the slave-holders." What Graaff-Reinet's proposals amounted to was this: that they could keep the slaves they had, and all male slaves to be born as long as any female slave then existing was capable of bearing children. I calculate that on Graaff-Reinet's proposal the institution of slavery would have existed with increasing numbers till the middle of the century at least, and after that in a slowly decaying form, till the present time, when there might still have been, under the Graaff-Reinet arrangement, many thousand slaves for life in the Colony. Such is the proposal which Dr. Theal mentions with grave complacency. "The Graaff-Reinet proposals," he says in his larger history, "were generally accepted throughout the Colony as a reasonable basis for the extinction of slavery, and a

law founded on them would certainly have met with public approval." I don't doubt it. There are few who would make much fight against a prohibition law to come into effect a hundred years hence.

Of course the Graaff-Reinet proposals were not listened to ; one can conceive the solemn indignation with which they would be received by venerable heads in England who hoped to live to see the total extinction of the institution of slavery. Mr. Fowell-Buxton, that eminent philanthropist and M.P., addressing the Anti-Slavery Society, rises into high tones of sarcasm over such proposals, which the Government, it seems, was toying with ; "a tame and dastardly intimation," he says, "that, perhaps, at some very distant time, and by some means, exceedingly gradual indeed, it might be expedient to consider whether it might not be as well to introduce something like justice into our dealings with the negro" ; and he calls on the Government for "a bold and manly avowal that the negroes are men, and entitled, as well as the loftiest among us, to a full and unqualified participation in every natural right and every moral privilege."

In 1830 fresh orders in council were issued, and amongst them a clause requiring that a punishment record book should be kept by every slave-proprietor, and submitted twice a year, under oath, to the protector of slaves in the district. This order produced

something like a riot in the Stellenbosch district, where the slaves were numerous and on isolated farms, and a supplementary order was soon after issued restricting its operation to the Capetown district and the British settlement at Grahamstown. Still, Exeter Hall (now become a name in the world) and Zion Chapel pressed on undaunted. In 1832 the hours of slave-labour were limited to nine daily, and protectors were given the power of entering slave dwellings at any time for the purpose of inspection; an enactment which caused new commotions and angry protests amongst classes which had never hitherto given the Government any trouble. It had become an absolute conflict between two different standards of civilisation. In 1833 the great blow came, when the British Parliament passed a bill for the abolition of slavery. The law was to take effect in Cape Colony on the 1st December, 1834. There were some alleviating measures. The slaves were to continue as apprentices to their former owners for four or six years. There was also to be money compensation.

The official historian of South Africa does not attack the Emancipation Act directly. He is even bold enough to say that the Dutch colonists did not approve of the slave system "in theory," a statement which either means little or is practically disproved, as Mr. Fitzpatrick remarks in his book, *The*

Transvaal from Within, by the usage of the Boers after the great trek. But Dr. Theal thinks the British Government did wrong in not accepting the colonists' proposal for a slow extinction of the system, Graaff-Reinet's proposal, for example. Had the question been one merely of economics, Dr. Theal's objection would have had greater force ; but to the mass of Abolitionists in Great Britain, slavery was a gross injustice to human flesh and blood, to the religious amongst them it was a crying evil in the sight of God ; even Dr. Theal blandly professes that he thinks it unjustifiable. Well, when you have once made up your mind and publicly admitted that a thing is evil, can you possibly halt and delay for years to remove it ? No doubt public opinion in England went more on what it heard of the atrocities of slavery in the West Indies, than on what it knew of it in South Africa ; but the general situation was the same, and the point of view from which it was regarded by the average Briton, standing midway between the extreme Abolitionists, who were unwilling to admit that the slave-owner had any right to compensation, and the slave-owners themselves, who demanded full compensation, is very clearly put by Lord Macaulay's speech in favour of abolition. " He approved," he said, " of the principle of emancipation, he approved also of the principle of compensation to the slave-owners ; but what he could not approve of (I condense him here a

little) was the principle of a transition state," *i.e.*, a prolongation, in some modified form, of slavery, which he represents as virtually making the slave pay for what he had a right to without payment, his freedom. "The planters and the State," he said, "had been accomplices in a crime; and it would be exceedingly hard and unjust to throw the burden of retribution on one party." (Mark that *one party*, that represents an English point of view, which Dr. Theal does not notice.) "But," continues Macaulay, "it would be still more hard and unjust to lay any portion of it on the third and injured party." (Speeches, p. 203.) In fact, it amounts to what I have already expressed: when you once admit a thing to be a downright crime, you must stop it immediately. That was the attitude of the eminent men who led public opinion on this question in England.

But Dr. Theal is very severe on some defects which he thinks existed in the Government's method of carrying out its measure. It would not indeed be easy to frame an abolition law of this comprehensive kind which would give satisfaction to all parties. Dr. Theal thinks that the measure was somewhat sudden,¹ and had the effect of disorganising for a time industry in some districts where the agriculture was dependent on slave-labour. That is very probable, although I

¹ The slave-holders had four years (of the enforced apprenticeship system) to prepare for results.

could wish that Dr. Theal had given us some statistics and references as to the character of the labour in these districts. It certainly could not seriously affect the farmer of Graaff-Reinet, where the number of Hottentots and free coloured servants, as I find from the *Records*, was at least nine or ten times greater than that of the slaves. In fact, the vast majority of the latter were in Capetown and the adjoining districts, and owned by wealthy and well-to-do burghers.

The money compensation also, Dr. Theal complains, was inadequate, about a million and a quarter sterling being allowed by the British Government as Cape Colony's share for its 35,000 slaves, valued at three millions sterling. But, as we have seen, there were different views of what "adequacy" meant on this question. I have already quoted Lord Macaulay's, according to which the State and the slave-holder had each been accomplices in a great crime, and each ought, therefore, to share the loss. We must remember also that the Abolition party insisted, amongst other things, that the years of enforced apprenticeship allowed to the masters were to be considered in fixing the amount of compensation.

One cause of loss to the colonists, however, might have been avoided. It appears that the British Government did not send the money to South Africa, but required each claim to be presented before Commis-

sioners in London. "This decision," Dr. Theal says, "brought into the country a swarm of petty agents, who purchased claims at perhaps half their real value." There is much virtue in that "perhaps." Judge Cloete, himself a slave-holder and bitter on the Abolitionists, says the Discounters in Capetown and Grahamstown bought up the claims at 18 to 20 per cent. discount, and, "he verily believes," at 25 to 30 per cent. in the country. Neither notices the fact that there was (since 1808) a responsible discounting bank at Capetown.

In any case the British people did pay £1,200,000 of its own to do away with slavery in Cape Colony, and if that act was so beneficial to that country as Dr. Theal admits it to have been, why is his tone so bitter in speaking of the British Government, and his narrative overlaid with such phrases as "widows and orphans made destitute," "poverty and anxiety brought into hundreds of homes," "widespread misery," "parents descending into the grave in penury," "relatives and friends once wealthy reduced to toil for bread," all through the "confiscation" of their slaves? A description, in short, which would be quite strongly enough coloured for the ruined condition of the Southern States of America after the Civil War, but could hardly be applicable to a country where there were only 30,000 marketable slaves—men, women, and children over six years old—of

whom only 5,663 were effective field labourers, 5,325 labourers of an inferior type, valued at half the others, while much the larger number, about 15,000, were domestic servants, the rest being tradesmen or employed on wharfs, &c.¹ And these existed amongst a far larger population of whites and free coloured servants, so that the general prosperity of the country was not even appreciably affected by the change. No doubt the Abolition Act bore hard in some of the corn-growing districts and in certain cases of aged people and widows, whose property may have consisted mainly of slaves, but under the circumstances it is difficult to believe that the suffering was at once so widespread and intense as Dr. Theal pictures it.

Why, too, should the official historian of Cape Colony notice only the defects of the Abolition Act, without the least recognition of the worthy motive (fairly backed up by a million and a quarter sterling) which inspired the British people, or of the difficulties with which the Government had to contend in carrying out an Abolition Act, which affected 800,000 slaves in all the British colonies and cost the nation twenty millions sterling, besides the sacrifice of great trade and shipping interests and the loss of capital at home. It is a rather curious fact that an official of the Empire, for such the former archivist

¹ See Parliamentary Return to the House of Lords, 1838, in Martin's *British Colonies*.

and historiographer of Cape Colony certainly is, should insult the British nation by sneering at the Abolition Act as "a noble and generous act carried out at the expense of the colonists." Surely that style of Dr. Theal's is significant of much that has been going on in the Colony for the last twenty years.

But the most daring case of misrepresentation on the part of Dr. Theal is where he seeks to leave his readers with an impression that the British Government was mainly responsible for the number of slaves in the Colony. Here is how he puts it in his *Story of the Nations* volume :—

As long as the Dutch East India Company held the colony slaves were brought into it, but not in very large numbers, for their services were only needed to a limited extent. During the first British occupation [1795-1803] a great many more were imported, as the trade was then profitable, and English energy was employed in it. The Batavian Government [*he means the restored Dutch rule from 1803 to 1806*], being opposed to the system, allowed very few to be landed, and had it lasted a couple of years longer every child born thereafter would have been declared free.¹

The impression which that paragraph conveys to the ordinary reader must be that British rule is chiefly

¹ As a matter of fact, twenty years afterwards the English Government was still labouring with no great effect to get the Dutch and French Governments to make their engagements to suppress even the ocean slave trade with their colonies a reality, and not a pretence.

responsible for the number of slaves in Cape Colony. The *Records* show the facts of the case to be as follows:

First, in 1795, when the British forces took possession of Cape Colony, the number of slaves already there was 16,939. (See census returns in *Records*, 1793-1796, p. 297.)

Second, shipments of slaves during the British rule were made under special permission, which was difficult to get and generally given only on the pressing request of the Burgher Senate, setting forth the necessity of additional labour for agricultural purposes. The following extracts from a letter of the Burgher Senate to General Dundas, dated February 25, 1799, will show exactly the strict supervision under which any trade in slaves was allowed by the British Governors.

. . . . It has pleased your Excellency to desire of us to inform your Excellency if Mozambique slaves are proper for the colony, and if in our opinion an importation of 400 slaves ought to be allowed.

. . . . As we are not fortunate enough to be able to do without slaves, more especially as agriculture here is infinitely more difficult than in any other known country, it is therefore indispensably necessary (to prevent agriculture from going to decay) that a sufficient number of slaves should annually be imported.

. . . . Should it please your Excellency to determine to rescue the inhabitants from the lamentable want of slaves . . . it would then, in our opinion, be most necessary to open the

slave trade to the inhabitants of this colony, under restrictions that at first no more than 1000 slaves should annually be imported. These circumstances we have already demonstrated more than once . . . to his Excellency, the Earl of Macartney, and most urgently set forth our solicitation . . . but Lord Macartney having been pleased in his replies . . . to reject our reiterated representations and requests in a manner which was so grievous for us . . . that we were deterred from ever expressly making again any representation or request to Government on the subject. (*Records*, 1799-1801, p. 372.)

General Dundas granted permission accordingly to Messrs. Hogan and Tennant, Capetown merchants, to import these four hundred slaves from Mozambique, but annulled their previous and exclusive right of importing four hundred slaves annually from the West Coast of Africa, and refused generally to permit importation from any quarter (*Records*, 1799-1801, p. 378); and the trade continued (though there was some attempt at illicit importation under Sir George Yonge's rule) to be limited by the strictest supervision till February, 1803, when the British Government restored the Cape to the Dutch, under whom the trade was carried on in the same way. On the reoccupation of the Colony by the British in 1806, there was only a year more till the abolition of the oceanic trade in slaves by the British Parliament in 1807. During that period five hundred slaves were imported with the sanction of General Baird.

Further, Dr. Theal himself, in his larger history, mentions, in connection with some financial report,

that the average yearly amount paid for imported slaves during the years of British rule up to 1803, as about £45,000. Now the price of a slave, as given by Lord Macartney's list of prices in 1798, was from £80 to £100 ; in 1799 it had risen, as I learn from the Burgher Senate's letter quoted above, to £120 and £160. Of course in the case of Africander slaves it was very much higher, often from £400 to £600. Making all allowances, these figures might give an average of four or five hundred slaves annually, just what one might infer from the particulars given in the *Records*. From three to four thousand slaves then, admitted to meet the increased demand for labour caused by commercial growth, represent, probably, the British responsibility for a slave population which numbered 17,000 when British rule began, and which had reached 39,000 when Emancipation came in 1834 ; the increase being partly that of half-breeds from a Dutch father and a slave mother. It is Olive Schreiner herself who tells us that of every four children born to a slave mother three were the children of the white man, her master.

The facts, therefore, do not seem to justify the grave impression of British responsibility for slavery in South Africa which Dr. Theal's paragraph is calculated to give *the ordinary reader*. I hardly think his way of stating the matter is consistent with that very high claim which he puts forth in the preface to his

volume in the *Story of the Nations* series, to have told the truth "regardless of nationalities and parties," and to have avoided "anything like favour or prejudice."

The emancipation of the slaves is not admitted by Dr. Theal to have been in itself amongst the causes of the "great trek." But while he admits in a brief, reluctant sort of manner that the measure was right in principle he is fond of enlarging on all the possible disadvantages by which it was or might be accompanied. One of these, of course, was the number of idle, vagrant blacks whom it might let loose on the community, and Dr. Theal has four pages on this subject designed to show the wrong-headedness of the Home Government in opposing the enactment of a law against vagrancy. A draft ordinance of such a law had indeed been approved by Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the governor, shortly after his arrival. Under it commandants, field-cornets, and provisional field-cornets had power to arrest persons having no apparent means of subsistence and bring them before a magistrate or justice of the peace, who could set them to forced labour till they accepted employment from the farmers.

Here again, Dr. John Philip, of the London Missionary Society, fought the battle of the black man with his usual energy and success. He sent a memorial to the council at Capetown and threatened to appeal to the English nation and Parliament.

The governor, knowing now something more of the facts, and supported by some members of the council, and Mr. Van der Riet of Uitenhage, one of the district commissioners, refused to sanction the measure and referred it to the Home Government, by whom it was disallowed. (See Theal, *History of South Africa*, vol. iii. p. 424.) In Dr. Theal's pages the English Government certainly appears as careless or ignorant, Sir Benjamin as a new governor deceived by misrepresentations, and Dr. Philip as a fanatical missionary; how he explains the opposition of Mr. Van der Riet, who was himself a Dutchman and a resident of the border district where vagrancy would be most dangerous, I don't know.

The principle of the vagrancy law, as stated by Dr. Theal, sounds very sensible to the ear of the English reader of to-day; but does the English reader realise how it would have worked in the frontier provinces of Cape Colony at that date? Even Mr. Boyce, that able Wesleyan missionary, who in his book (*Notes on South Africa*) says a good word for the Boers wherever he can, reluctantly admits that they could not be trusted with the administration of a Vagrancy Act, which in their hands would certainly become "an engine of oppression" for the coloured race. Dr. Theal actually makes it an argument in favour of vagrancy laws, that there were such old Dutch laws still in existence against white people; why not, then,

against black? And he uses this disingenuous argument in another similar case. "Why not?" Let the reader consider the following account given by Thomas Pringle, the author of *African Sketches*, of what he saw in the jail for the native races in the district of Beaufort, and he will readily understand why not:

This tronk consisted of a single apartment, of about twenty feet long by twelve or fourteen broad; and for the purposes of light and ventilation had only one small grated opening, in the shape of a loop-hole, at a considerable height in the wall. Into this apartment were crowded about thirty human beings, of both sexes, of all ages, and of almost every hue except white. The whites, or *Christen menschen*, as they call themselves, are seldom imprisoned, except for some flagrant outrage, and then in some place apart from the coloured prisoners; lest the "Christian" thief or murderer should be dishonoured by being forced to associate with his brother men of swarthy hue; even though many of the latter, as in the present case, should be guiltless of any crime.

The condition of this jail was dreadful. On the door being opened, the clergyman requested me to wait a few minutes until a freer ventilation had somewhat purified the noisome atmosphere within, for the effluvia, on the first opening of the door, were too horrible to be encountered. This I can well believe; for when, after this precaution, we did enter, the odour was still more than I could well endure; and it was only by coming frequently to the open door to inhale a renovating draught of wholesome air, that I could accomplish such an examination of this dismal den as the aspect and condition of its inmates urgently claimed from humanity. The denizens of this horrible dungeon were runaway slaves—Hottentots who had come to the drostdy to complain of their masters, and Hottentots who were merely out of place, and had been

apprehended and sent here till some white man should deign to accept of their services, offered to him not by themselves, but by colonial law.

But all castes and grades, the innocent and the guilty, and the injured complainant equally with the hardened malefactor, were crowded together without distinction into this narrow and noisome dungeon.¹

I can very well understand then why Dr. Philip and the missionaries opposed the Vagrancy Act of 1834, why Sir Benjamin, on reflection, did not adhere to it, and why the home government, kept very well informed by Pringle himself, who was then in England and secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, disallowed it. It meant the legal establishment of a distinction between white and black under which the latter would have felt himself as much as ever at the mercy of his master. Instead of beginning a new era of even-handed justice for all races, and the adoption, as far as possible, of the principle of legal equality, it would have recalled the evils Pringle had seen in 1822.

The missionaries and philanthropists had conquered all along the line. But for some time the benefits of the emancipation measures continued to be hotly debated. The ordinary Englishman like Alfred Cole, a brisk sporting young gentleman, or Captain Harris,

¹ Dr. Theal apparently thinks he replies sufficiently to such accounts by asserting that "the majority of the Hottentots rather enjoyed prison life than dreaded it."—See *History of South Africa*, vol. iii. p. 342.

of the Engineers, the same type with a professional tincture of science added, travelling in South Africa in search of shooting and adventure, has generally only one opinion. He finds that John April and Claas September, his freed Hottentots, being no longer under fear of the sjambok, are sometimes drunk or careless, occasionally even perverse, and he swears at the missionaries generally as "canting and designing men," who have spoiled the native by their interference "veiled under the cloak of philanthropy."¹

Dr. Theal also has great delight in recording any failure to persevere, any lapse of a convert like poor Jan Ishatshu, many years a faithful assistant of the Bethelsdorp missionaries, but who in his later days fell, Dr. Theal says, into drunken habits; or of chief Pato, the pet of the Wesleyans, who—perhaps not unnaturally—at length turned against the aggressive white race and led his men against the Colony in the war of 1846. It can hardly be expected that one generation of training will entirely subdue wild instincts, and there is certainly nothing more abnormal or unchristian in the conduct of Pato than in that of President Steyn, who sent his men into Natal to raid and plunder British farmers and shopkeepers who had neither harmed nor threatened him, neither they nor the British Government.

¹ Harris, *Expedition into South Africa*, p. 346. A book much praised by Theal as "one of the very best accounts ever given."

Even to-day some of the British officers returning from the war, will tell you that unless you use the sjambok with the native you will have neither good service nor respect from him. It must at least be there, in reserve, say others. It may be so, and yet be very unadvisable to give that vague discretionary power assumed at times by the white man, anything of a fixed and legal character under which the white man becomes a tyrant and the black one a slave. Even a vagrancy law is sure to be made an instrument of slavery, wherever it is administered by a race which has an interest in creating slaves. As Mr. Bryce, who has spoken wisely and candidly on this subject in his book, *Impressions of South Africa*, says, "The sense of his superior intelligence and energy of will produces in the European a sort of tyrannous spirit, which will not condescend to argue with the native, but overbears him by sheer force, and is prone to resort to physical coercion."¹

To shoot down in the open field of battle savage tribes which have opposed themselves to the opening up of territories and routes may be a necessity or not, but at least it is a different thing from reducing them to servitude, and subjecting them all the days of their life to the avarice and passions of a despotic master.

With regard to the benefits of freedom to the slaves

¹ Chap. xxi. p. 442.

themselves, Dr. Theal, that friend of emancipation in theory, draws a comparison between the negro slave of 1834 and "his grandchildren of 1890," which is much in favour of the former as "better fed, better clothed, &c., more respectable in his conduct and habits." (*Hist. of South Africa*, chap. xxxvi. p. 423.)

It is an old and well-worn argument for slavery this of Dr. Theal's, but it has become highly suspicious, I think, to an age which has learned something of general economic laws, and knows that the only real way of raising the general level of conduct and morality in any class of men is by improving its status and increasing its self-respect, and not by lowering both. It is true that there are some superficial phenomena on the other side. An iron rule may crush out some weeds of indolence and petulance in a race or class of men; there may, for example, be double or treble the number of idle and vicious in a subject race newly set free, but there will certainly be more than treble the number of self-respecting and well-doing persons, and there will be a great number of those who reach a level quite impossible for a race which is enslaved. Whatever truth there is in the other view may serve as a caution to those who expect too much from mere legislative reform, or expect it too soon. But you must begin.

XV

The Question of Expansion—*Exit Gens Bosjesmanica*—The Difficulties on the Kaffir Frontier—The Kosa-Kaffir Tribes—The Commando System.

THE protective legislation for slaves and free natives within the Colony culminating in the Emancipation Act had naturally caused a great deal of irritation amongst the farmers generally throughout the Colony.

It is no easy matter even in the most civilised nations to get whole classes to sacrifice their interests on general considerations of humanity which can always at least be debated on the other side. Much education, including the moral compulsion which the highest minds exercise on the general body of the nation, was needed in England, before manufacturers grew accustomed to the idea of Factory Acts and government inspection. In legislation of this kind, every class has been morally coerced for the general welfare by the union of other classes whose interests were less directly affected. That was just what

happened in Cape Colony regarded as a part of the Empire. But as far as much the greater part of Cape Colony was concerned the acute stage of conflict between the two civilisations, British and Boer, ended with the Emancipation Act of 1833; but the eastern frontier district, the old district of Graaff-Reinet, had a problem of its own which was not only more difficult for the Government to settle, but much more difficult to determine on what principles it ought to be settled. This was the old question of the Border policy, and the treatment of the Kaffir tribes, which had from the beginning given so much trouble to the Government. It was really the question of territorial expansion.

On the northern frontier this question had ceased to give trouble. The long conflict between the white man and the native race in that quarter had practically ended in the disappearance of the Bushmen as a race. Wandering bands of them still existed scattered over the almost uninhabitable parts of the northern Karroo, and in some districts small parties of them might be found settled near a Boer's farm, helping to tend his flocks, and receiving in return a little milk or tobacco, or the offal of the sheep he slaughtered. But the formidable race that in Barrow's time had held the Boers in check from the Hantam to the Sneeuwberg had almost disappeared.

Dr. Theal has little to say on the subject, and uses

no large rubrics such as he lavishes on the Circuit Court trials of 1812. The following quiet paragraph, some twenty lines of his history, notices the disappearance of the Bushmen race, and suggests that it was the work of the Griquas or Bastard Hottentots who had settled at the Orange River.

Of the different classes of free coloured inhabitants, the Bushmen, once so formidable, were now the least important. Before the English conquest they had ceased as a race to offer opposition to the advance of the Europeans. (?) After the settlement of the Griquas north of the Orange, their numbers were very rapidly reduced, and they had no longer a place of security to which they could retire when colonial commandos were searching for them. The Griquas, being partly of Hottentot blood, had all the animosity of Hottentots towards the Bushman race. Possessed of horses and firearms, they followed the occupation of hunters, and were thus equipped in the best manner for destroying Bushmen, to whom they showed no quarter. Some of those whom they pursued retreated to the Kalahari desert, others fled into the waste region south of the lower course of the Orange, but the larger number perished. [*Larger number of the Bushman race? or only of those whom, &c. Read carefully, O reader!*]

During the early years of the century colonial commandos were occasionally sent against plundering bands, but after 1810 very little blood was shed, and generally all the members of these little hordes were made prisoners, when they were apprenticed to such persons as could make use of them. The adults, however, seldom remained long in service, no matter how kindly they were treated. (*Hist. of South Africa*, chap. xxxv., p. 337.)

It is doubtful if even the records of the drostdies of Worcester and Graaff-Reinet would throw much

light on the disappearance of the Bushman race. In 1824 Mr. Fowell-Buxton moved in the House of Commons for a return regarding the condition of the Hottentots and Bushmen at the Cape of Good Hope. As part of that return Lord Charles Somerset forwarded an official list of the commandos sent out against Bushmen from 1797 to 1824, from which it appeared that during that period 53 commandos had been sent out, 184 Bushmen had been killed, 14 had been wounded, and 302 taken prisoners. Lord Charles adds that the expeditions mostly took place during the latter end of the last century.

Lord Somerset's report will evidently not do much to explain the extinction of the Bushmen, but I think there must have been official smiles and nods at the Secretary's office when that document was sealed up and sent for the edification of the British public. No doubt the Governor himself did not know the half of what went on,¹ but he must have suspected the list to be an exceedingly mild one.

What the report really suggests, when compared with other testimonies of that period, is the silent, unrecorded, remorseless character of the warfare which the Boers of the northern frontier had been carrying on in these years against the Bushmen.

The following facts may help the reader to supple-

¹ For a small illustration see Meyer's letter in Barrow, vol. ii. p. 54.

ment the official records of the drostdies and Dr. Theal's quiet reserve.

After the first British occupation of the Cape there seems to have been a lull in commando operations against the Bushmen, Lord Macartney being in favour of a humane policy, and insisting on a milder manner of conducting these expeditions. In 1809 this policy was also supported, as regards the Bushmen, by Colonel Collins, the Commissioner of Inquiry appointed by Lord Caledon. "The Bushmen," Colonel Collins reported, "often suffer extreme misery and seldom rob but to satisfy their wants." But the tendency of the times was against the Bushmen. The stoppage of the oceanic trade in slaves in 1807, the legislative protection of the Hottentots and the increasing numbers of the colonists, all tended to make the demand for cheap labour greater, and to send the Boer north in search of new pastures and Bushmen children to serve on his farm.

Lord Charles Somerset was naturally inclined to give the Boer a fair chance in this region. Even if there should be encroachment on some of the miserable kraals of the Bushmen, he probably thought, like Lichtenstein, that there was no great harm in taking away land from nomads who had no particular use for it. At any rate in 1817 he permitted the land-drosts to apprentice Bushmen children to the Boers under certain safeguards, with the view of regulating

and controlling the habits of the Boers with respect to such children. He seems also to have discouraged the interference of missionaries in that region. In 1818 he refused the Rev. B. Shaw, a Wesleyan missionary, permission to establish a station amongst the Bushmen, and in the same year he withdrew the mission stations of the London Missionary Society already established at Hephzibah and Troverberg (the modern Colesberg) on account of the disputes which they had with the Boers regarding the possession of Bushmen children.¹

After that the struggle between the Boers and the Bushmen went on in the dark, as indeed it had always in a great measure done, except for the casual information furnished by an occasional traveller in those districts.

In 1823 George Thompson was travelling through the Sneeuwberg region and reports the following :—

While at this place (Karel Okom's) I heard that a commando, or expedition of armed boers, had been recently out against the Bushmen in the mountains, where they had shot thirty of these poor creatures. I also learned that above 100 Bushmen had been shot last year in the Tarka. (*Travels*, vol. i. p. 74.)

That was thirteen years after the date when Theal assures us blood had almost ceased to be shed. In

¹ This seems to be the "misconduct" for which Dr. Theal states, rather vaguely, that Mr. Smith of Troverberg was recalled. See Smith's letter in Philip's *Researches*, vol. ii. p. 280; also Moffat's account in *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, p. 51.

1824 the same writer then travelling in the Roggeveld region, much farther west, stayed at the house of Field-Commandant Nel, whom he describes as a "meritorious, benevolent and clear-sighted man" on any question except this of Bushmen.

Nel informed me (he writes) that within the last thirty years he had been upon thirty-two commandos against the Bushmen, in which great numbers had been shot, and their children carried into the colony. On one of these expeditions not less than 200 Bushmen were massacred! . . . Such has been, and *still, to a great extent is*, the horrible warfare existing between the Christians and the natives of the northern frontier, and by which the process of extermination is still proceeding against the latter, in the same style as in the days of Barrow. (*Idem.* vol. i. p. 395.)

That is the testimony of a moderate man, very friendly to the Boers, well acquainted with the country, and a writer whose authority Theal himself acknowledges.¹

These events, it must be remembered, took place on a distant frontier, hardly ever visited by the stranger, and difficult of access. There was no one but the Boers themselves to place them on record. Only occasionally a Hottentot scout might tell the tale of a foray, or a tame Bushman in the service of a farmer might pour the history of his woes, or those of his little kraal, into the ears of a traveller or a

¹ For similar testimony see Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 243; Philip, *Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 40, 44, 45, 51; Bannister, *Humane Policy*, pp. 226, 228. For the general condition of the Bushmen, see Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, chap. iv.

missionary. There is only one case, so far as I know, where the Bushman may be said to have written a fragment of his own history. In 1825 Dr. Philip and a missionary party were travelling to the mission station at Philippolis and had got about a day's journey north of Troverberg (modern Colesberg), when their Hottentot attendants discovered some natives dodging timorously about the rocks in the neighbourhood. They turned out to be the Bushman chief Uithaalder, and the remnants of his kraal which had formerly been under the protection of the mission station once existing at Troverberg. They were easily induced to approach when they knew the waggon was a missionary's, and Dr. Philip had the opportunity, therefore, of learning Uithaalder's story from his own lips.

It is characteristic of the strenuous, practical, legal mind of the Doctor that he drew up the Bushman's story in the form of a deposition, "That deponent is a chief," &c. One would have preferred Pringle for this business, even at the expense of a little Campbell varnish. There can be no doubt, however, about its fidelity, which is attested by four witnesses. Uithaalder's story then, in protocol form, runs, in the parts quoted, as follows :

2nd. That many years ago, the father of the deponent and his people, whilst in perfect peace, and not having committed the smallest provocation, were suddenly attacked in their kraal by a

party of boors from the colony. He and many hundreds of his people, men, women, and children were killed, and ten waggons, loaded with their children, were carried into the colony, and placed in perpetual servitude.

3rd. That since this melancholy occurrence [*very unartistic this, Doctor, and very Unbushman-like*] many commandos have come against my people, in which multitudes of them have been shot, and the children carried away ; and this practice was continued till our late teacher, the Rev. E. Smith, condescended to live amongst us, to preach the Word of God, and to teach us to read, and to refrain from doing harm to anybody.

4th. That while the Rev. E. Smith continued among us, he taught us to cultivate gardens, . . . showed us how to grow potatoes and plough land, and . . . we were very happy and hoped that our troubles were over.

6th. That some moons after Mr. Smith's removal, the boors came and took possession of our fountains, chased us from the lands of Toverberg, and made us go and keep their sheep. Whitboy, one of my Bushmen, and his wife, were both shot by the boors whilst taking shelter among the rocks, and their child¹ carried into perpetual servitude [*duly registered by the Boers, no doubt, according to Somerset's law, with the landdrost at Graaf-Reinet, as entrusted to their care by the said Whitboy.*]

7th. That I, Uithaalder, was sent by the field-cornet, Van der Walt, to keep his sheep ; that one night three of his sheep were missing and the field-cornet flogged deponent with the sjambok, and drove himself and his wife and children from his place, and said, " Go now, take that ; you have not now Mr. Smith, the missionary, to go to, to complain against me." [*The three sheep were afterwards found, deponent says.*]

10th. That I, Uithaalder, without people, with my wife and four young children, was necessitated to live among the mountains, and to subsist upon roots and locusts.¹

Uithaalder's account is, I judge, a fair outline of the Bushman's experience in general. It is quite

¹ Philip, *Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 51-53.

true, as Pringle himself remarks, that "the Dutch-African colonists have not been worse than other people would be and have been in similar circumstances." But the fact remains that South Africa has been a land of blood and slavery from the beginning. The skies above the head of the Transvaal Boer are of brass.

Latterly, when the warfare was almost over, some of the better class of Boers seem to have had compunctious visitings over these tragic events, and to have adopted milder measures with the Bushmen. Thompson quotes a letter from Mr. Melville of Griqua Town, which relates a conversation he had with the Field-Commandant, Gert Van der Walt, in 1821.

He told me that both his father and himself had been for many years at war with this people. From the time that he could use a gun he went upon commandos : but he could now see, he owned, that no good was ever done by this course of vindictive retaliation. They still continued their depredations . . . and he was constantly in danger of losing his cattle and of being murdered by them . . . he had, for a few years past, tried what might be done by cultivating peace with them. . . . This plan was to keep a flock of goats to supply the Bushman with food in seasons of great want, and occasionally to give them other little presents : by which means he not only kept on friendly terms with them, but they became very serviceable in taking care of his flocks in dry seasons. He said, that on such occasions, when there was no pasturage on his own farm, he was accustomed to give his cattle entirely into the hands of the chief of a tribe who lived near him, and after a certain period they

never failed to be brought back in so improved a condition that he scarcely knew them to be his own.¹

Both Thompson and Philip who went through the old Bushman country in 1823 and 1825 speak of the general disappearance of their kraals. No doubt the extinction of the race was partly brought about by their being driven from their fountains and the more habitable parts of the country to mere desert wastes or mountain fastnesses where penury and suffering must have put an end to the existence of many. In some districts also they were exposed to the attacks of Griquas and Kaffirs, and they themselves, by their savage resolution to slaughter their children rather than leave them to be captives of the Boers, helped in the extermination of their race. Some remnants of them seem to have found refuge in the then unknown solitudes of the Kalahari desert, and wandering couples of them, puny, yellow-faced and wizened, and steatopygous as ever, were occasionally met with by the Canadian soldiers who went to the relief of Mafeking.

The question of the Eastern frontier was a much more difficult one to settle. There the colonists were confronted by the Kosa-Kaffir tribes, a warlike race, well organised under their hereditary chiefs, and

¹ See Melville's letter in Thompson, vol. i. p. 404 ; also Nel's arrangements with the Bushman chief in his neighbourhood, vol. i. p. 394 ; also Pringle's *Narrative*, p. 238.

numbering, according to Brownlee's estimate, about 130,000.

The Kaffir is a term sometimes used to include all the Bantu tribes living along the east coast of Africa, from the Kosas to the Zulus and Swazis, though at that time it was generally applied by the colonists only to the neighbouring tribes of the Kosas and Tembus, or Tambookies, as they are styled in the old books. The Kaffirs were a very fine specimen of a savage race, tall, well-made, muscular figures, every motion full of grace, the countenance alert and cheerful, with features often of a high Asiatic type, and seldom marked by the thick protruding lips or flattened nose of the negro. The men are trained for war, hunting and the care of cattle, while the women cultivate the ground, planting the millet, maize, pumpkins, &c. The Western Kaffir, unless excited by what he considered an outrage, was neither a bloodthirsty nor an aggressive neighbour to the white man. In the old days the Boers of the Sneeuwberg, who were the best class of *vee-boer*, gave the Kaffirs an excellent character in reply to the inquiries of Dr. Vanderkemp, then on his way to his first mission in Kaffirland,¹ and the Amakosa chiefs, at least, even when quarrelling among themselves, did not exhibit anything of that ferocious temper which distinguished the sanguinary rulers of the Zulus. Their chiefs and

¹ *Evangelical Magazine*, vol. 8, p. 74.

councillors were often men of uncommon capacity and elevated mind, but as a nation their religious instinct took unclean forms of witchcraft and orgiastic tribal rites, under cover of which blood was often shed. Not unfrequently, after being tutored and made converts of by the missionaries, they would steal away under some old Dionysiac impulse to the nocturnal dance and orgy, and the chief, even when he encouraged and protected the missionary, generally took care to set the latter's hut at a distance from "the great house," which he himself inhabited. The variety of features and colour amongst them seem to indicate a certain mixture of race, perhaps something of the Arab at one end and a dash of the equatorial negro at the other.

They were acute judges of the character of white men, and knew the difference at once between a Vanderkemp and a Williams, good as both were in their way. Some of the missionaries were very plain men, of little education, and less able indeed to take a philosophical survey of the Kaffir and his ways than the Kaffir was of them and theirs, a fact which the reader of missionary accounts must occasionally allow for. One of these worthy men, who was visiting Ndlambe's dwelling, finding no chair to use, sat down on a large pumpkin which was lying near, meant, no doubt, for Ndlambe's dinner, and found to his surprise that his action was "regarded as a great

breach of good manners" by the whole assembly. "For," said one of them, "we eat the *ipuzi*, and not sit upon it." The Kaffir had high notions of his own about etiquette, even if he could not control himself at the sight of beads and brass buttons.

But in the eyes of the colonists the most important point about the Kaffir was that he was a "riever," as the Scots used to say, as inveterate a cattle-lifter as any Donald Bean Lean of the Highland hills. How much of this was natural propensity and how much was a spirit of revenge on the part of tribes like the Imidange for the wrongs they had suffered, it is impossible now to say. Even the missionaries take little or no notice, only Vanderkemp once, of the local hates and specific vengeance on the Border. At any rate Thompson quotes James Pringle of Glen Lynden to the effect that the exposed Scotch settlement there found both the Boers and Kaffirs very decent neighbours, and had hardly lost a hoof from the latter. I am inclined to think that the mischief in ordinary times came, in a great measure, from a long-drawn series of raids, reprisals and counter-reprisals, the true history of which was known only to the frontier Boer and the Kaffir themselves. Pringle's pen-portrait of the Kaffir riever is probably a fair representation of his history :

Lo ! where he crouches by the cleugh's dark side,
Eyeing the farmer's lowing herds afar

Impatient watching till the Evening Star
Lead forth the Twilight dim, that he may glide
Like panther to the prey. With freeborn pride
He scorns the herdsman, nor regards the scar
Of recent wound—but burnishes for war
His assegai and targe of buffalo-hide.
He is a Robber?—True ; it is a strife
Between the black-skinned bandit and the white.
A Savage?—Yes ; though loth to aim at life,
Evil for evil fierce he doth requite.
A Heathen?—Teach him, then, thy better creed,
Christian ! if thou deserv'st that name indeed.

The system of reprisals which had been adopted as a defence against the depredations of the Kaffirs was certainly a rude one. When cattle were stolen from a farmer, he went out, accompanied by the nearest military patrol, on the spoor or track of the animals, and after following it to the first native kraal where it led, demanded restoration or took compensation. Sometimes, the patrol being distant, an armed party of Boers did the work for themselves. This was quite right according to Kaffir ideas, and would not, on ordinary occasions, give rise to trouble ; but sometimes, of course, it led to disputes, and when, for other reasons, the feelings of the Kaffirs had been excited and war was in the wind, a refusal to give compensation for stolen cattle and a scuffle with the patrol, were usually the opening incidents of an outbreak. When the depredations of the Kaffirs had been great or numerous the local

authorities would obtain permission to call out a large commando of burghers and make reprisals. It may have been hard to distinguish sometimes, but it seems certain that inoffensive kraals were occasionally attacked and their inhabitants shot down during such expeditions.¹ Under such a system there would certainly be abuses, and it was difficult to decide who was the original wrong-doer. In earlier times the Boer might have had some advantage in this warfare when the use of the commando was under less strict regulations, and Pringle, who was on the spot, is clear that he was still the aggressor in the years 1820-1825.² On the other hand, some years later, when the Kaffirs had been thoroughly irritated by the loss of their lands, there is the testimony of Mr. Boyce, the Wesleyan missionary, Mr. Davies, the Baptist missionary, and Mr. Bonatz, the Moravian missionary,³ to show that, in the matter of raiding, the Kaffir had become the gainer and generally the assailant.

In these later years the condition of the frontier Boers had improved greatly, both in a moral and economic sense. The British immigration had made the eastern districts populous and civilised. Graaff-

¹ See Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 312, and particularly p. 353.

² *Idem.* p. 311. See also the *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry*, quoted by Pringle, in Parliamentary Papers for 1827, Nos. 282, 300, 371, 444, and No. 584, for 1830.

³ See Boyce's *Notes on South Africa*, Appendix, and *Miss. Reg.* January, 1837.

Reinet village, which, in the days of Barrow, consisted of a few miserable mud huts, was now a flourishing town according to the South African standard, containing 300 neatly built houses, many of them elegant, says Thompson, with well laid out streets, and an excellently constructed canal, mainly the work of Landdrost Stockenström, a man respected and beloved by all classes, says the same authority.

There were still plenty of wild Jan Bezuidenhouts amongst them, and rascals like Erasmus of Bruintjes Hoogte and his associates, who plundered travellers unscrupulously, as Captain Harris relates.¹ But it was no longer quite the same country that Barrow had seen and described, and there were pious and humane men amongst them who looked with favour even on the Bethelsdorp mission for Hottentots. The average type was probably like Pringle's acquaintances at the Kat River, Lucas Van Vuur and the Mullers, a big, shrewd, easy-going Boer, of primitive manners, roughly honest, but not too scrupulous in his dealings with natives, and somewhat indolent except in the pursuit of wild game. They had grown opulent, too, in many cases, and there was no longer anything in the Kaffir kraals to recoup them for the loss of a valuable breed of cattle or horses.

¹ Harris, *Expedition into South Africa*, p. 18.

XVI

Expulsion of Makoma from the Kat River—The Hottentot Settlement there—Further Expulsion of Makoma from the Tyumie—The Kaffir War of 1834-1835—Sir Benjamin D'Urban's Policy of Annexation—Lord Glenelg's Policy of Withdrawal—Attitude of the Wesleyan Missionaries—The Great Trek Begins.

BESIDES the question of reprisals and the laws to be used in following the spoor, there was also the question of a frontier line to be considered. The re-occupation of the old Neutral Territory by the new settlements of the Boers at the Koonap, and the British immigrants in the coast district on the one side, and by Makoma at the Kat River, and the Gunukwebes and other Kaffirs farther south, had brought both sides again into close contact. In the south matters went on peaceably enough between the British settlers and the Gunukwebes, the latter and their chief, Pato, being under the influence of Mr. Shaw, the Wesleyan missionary; but farther north, where Makoma's kraals lay opposite the Boer settlements at the Koonap, there was the usual crop of

disputes and depredations. There is the usual obscurity as to who were the real aggressors. Pringle, who lived right on the spot in these years (1820-1825), regards the whole affair as a deep-laid combination between Lord Charles and the Boers to goad Makoma into reprisals and then oust him from the territory he occupied, and he supports his view by references to Sir Rufane Donkin's pamphlet and the Commissioners' Reports in the Parliamentary Papers for 1827 (See *Narrative*, p. 310). But Pringle and Donkin were both bitter opponents of Lord Charles, and not very prone to look for a reasonable side in his policy. On the other hand Dr. Theal does not even suggest that there may be any other side to the matter than that of unprovoked Kaffir depredations, and gives us a brief general statement on his own authority without the least reference to evidence, records or other opinions.¹

The general situation was evidently the old one. Lord Charles was doing his best for the white colonists, and especially for the Boers, on the broad general ground of the superior claims of the civilised race and their need of expansion, but he was endeavouring to do it with the minimum of violence

¹ *Hist. of South Africa*, chap. xxxv. p. 351. Dr. Theal takes no notice of these events (raid on Makoma in 1823, Massey's commando in 1824, &c.) when treating of Lord Somerset's administration, only in his account of Sir Lowry Cole, some chapters farther on.

and bloodshed possible in the circumstances. There was very little indeed of the latter ; and his action was to some extent justified by the necessity of a secure frontier.

It must be kept in mind, of course, that Makoma and the other Kaffir chiefs now held their lands in the Ceded Territory on sufferance : but that territory had been ceded in order to form a neutral belt of land between the two races, and they not unnaturally thought they had a good moral right to reoccupy their side of it, at least, when the colonists began to occupy the other. But it was a poor tenure for the native to hold his ground on against the white race. In 1829, Makoma had a quarrel with a vagrant band of Tembus who had settled near him, and drove them over the frontier into the Tarka district. The Governor, then Sir Lowry Cole, took this occasion of expelling Makoma and his people from the Kat River, forcing them to retire to the Tyumie, farther east.

And now the Colonial Government carried into effect a project which Philip, Pringle and other philanthropists had advocated for some years, that of planting a settlement of free Hottentots on lands of their own, as some compensation to that down-trodden and dispossessed race. The land which Makoma had vacated at the Kat River was accordingly granted to a community of Hottentots, a

number of whom came from the Bethelsdorp and Theopolis stations of the London Missionary Society. The settlement ultimately numbered over 5,000, and turned out very successful,¹ although Dr. Theal puts some very debatable and conjectural matter against its loyalty even into his Index.

According to Mr. Boyce and the Wesleyan missionaries, who, being mostly stationed in Kaffirland, were in the best position to know, it was this expulsion of Makoma from the Kat River valley which was the real cause of the Kaffir war which broke out in 1834. The origin of that war is usually attributed to a quarrel over a patrol in quest of stolen cattle, but it is quite clear that the Kaffirs did not regard the barbarous system of reprisals, even if occasionally abused, as a great grievance ; it was quite natural to them and in conformity with their own usages. But they had grown very sensitive on the subject of the occupation of their land, and their constant dread was that the Government should yield to the frontier Boer's demand for expansion at the expense of his heathen neighbour. Pringle in his *African Sketches* has a poem which represents the feeling of the Hottentot settlement at the Kat River in his time, that some day the Kosa-Kaffir would make an attempt to regain his former territory there. The

¹ For a description of the locations, see *Missionary Register*, 1834, p. 24 and p. 310.

verses are supposed to be uttered by a Hottentot widow, crooning to her baby :

To Kosa from Luheri high
 Looks down upon our dwelling :
 And shakes his vengeful assegai—
 Unto his clansmen telling
 How he, for us, by grievous wrong,
 Hath lost those fertile valleys ;
 And boasts that now his hand is strong
 To pay the debt of malice :
 But sleep, my child ; a mightier arm
 Shall shield thee (helpless one !) from harm.

Stephen Kay, the Wesleyan missionary, also describes the excitement at Hintsa's kraals east of the Kei River, when they heard of the expulsion of Makoma. "Amakosinia is dead," they said, "it is high time to kill every man and every Hottentot in it, Hintza's men, and Gaika's men, and Ndlambe's men are all one!"¹

But the fact is that the Wesleyan missionaries felt very strongly on the expulsion of Makoma from the Kat River and the consequent ruin of their mission station there, and did not quite, like Pringle, consider it atoned for by the substitution of a Hottentot settlement with a London Society missionary in charge. They resented somewhat also Dr. Philip's parleyings with Kaffir chiefs, and his appearance along with Read in Kaffirland, which they considered as their

¹ *Travels and Researches*, p. 306.

peculiar sphere of influence. Mr. Boyce, particularly, is a little heated on the subject and writes: "This interference of Dr. Philip was not warranted by any extensive missionary connection with that country." The fact is that the authority and influence which Philip now possessed had induced the Governor to make use of him as an informal intermediary at least with the Kaffir chiefs.

Still for five years after the expulsion of Makoma from the Kat River no disturbance took place, and during that time the various mission stations in Kaffirland and on the frontier, the Moravian brother Halter at Shiloh, Shaw and the Wesleyans at Wesleyville and Mount Coke, the London Society men, Brownlee and Kayser at the Buffalo River, report nothing but prosperity and peaceful prospects. As Shaw afterwards explained, though they had frequently heard threats, they thought it only the idle boastings of the young warriors. At any rate the fact remains that it was not till a new act of aggression had been committed by the Colonial Government that the Kosa-Kaffirs took up arms against the Colony.

In 1833 Lieut.-Colonel Wade, who was Acting-Governor of the Colony for a few months till the arrival of Sir Benjamin D'Urban, ordered Makoma and his people to retire across the Tyumie. The head waters of the Tyumie had been his father Gaika's

favourite residence, and was specially exempted from the cession of territory made by Gaika in 1819. Colonel Napier somewhere in his *Excursions in South Africa* eloquently describes the blue Tyumie hills with the rich masses of foliage in the valley and the river winding like a silver thread between, a kind of scenery which the Kaffir, who is allowed to have an eye for that sort of thing, loved to look upon.

Colonel Wade's act did not pass unchallenged by the Radical party at Capetown. Mr. Fairbairn, in the *South African Advertiser*, declaimed indignantly against it as a measure designed to satisfy "the covetousness of some individuals by new grants of land"; and in the same paper a letter dictated by Makoma himself appeared in which the chief made a strong protest against the treatment he was receiving. I do not propose to guarantee the correctness of all his statements, but perhaps it is only fair to hear the Kaffir chief's version as well as Dr. Theal's.

As I and my people have been driven back over the Chumie River without being informed why, I should be glad to know from the Government what evil we have done? I was only told that we must retire over the Chumie, but for what reason I was not informed. Both Stockenström and Somerset agreed that I and my people should live west of the Chumie, as well as east of it, without being disturbed. When shall I and my people be able to get rest?

When my father was living he reigned over the whole land from the Fish River to the Kei; but since the day he refused to help the Boors against the English, he has lost more than the

one half of his country by them. My father was always the best friend of the English Government, although he was a loser by them.

My poor people feel much the loss not only of their grazing ground (without which we cannot live), but also of our corn land. . . .

I have lived peaceably with my people west of the Chumie River. . . . When any of my people stole from the colonists, I have returned what was stolen. I have even returned the cattle which the people of other kraals have stolen. Yet both I and my brother Tyali have almost no more country for our cattle to live in. I am also much dissatisfied with the false charges sometimes spoken against me. I do not know why so many commandos come into this country and take away our cattle and kill our people without sufficient reason.¹

Whether Makoma was quite as immaculate as he says, and how far he may have suffered for depredations which he could not control, it is not easy to decide; but what is certain is that these events, these successive expulsions, particularly the last one, were the real causes of the Kaffir war of 1834—1835. It is unfortunate for the ordinary reader that Dr. Theal separates his account of these events entirely from his account of that war in Chap. xxxvii. of his history, in which the origin of that great outburst of the Kosas appears to be a theft of four horses from a Koonap farmer and a scuffle with a military patrol.

In 1828 the old chief Gaika had died, a politic old

¹ See Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 336. The reader can compare Dr. Theal's version of these events, Chap. xxxvi., pp. 402, 403.

barbarian, of whom Vanderkemp once "had hopes." Stephen Kay, who is a most useful man for the description of Kaffir superstitions, and had, in fact, a peculiar turn for describing these "dark abominations" of the heathen, gives a weird account of the last days of Gaika. As he drew near his end, the superstitions of his fathers grew strong on him, and he rose from his mat and danced wildly before his wizards and soothsayers in the hope of scaring away the demon of death, and one of his sons under similar influences, for the death of a great chief is a soul-stirring event amongst the Kaffirs, sacrificed a wife of his father's, who was supposed to be using evil enchantments against the old king. "So precarious," remarks Kay, "is the tenure of life where Paganism is predominant." Yet there were such things as the execution of the twenty Salem witches in godly New England under Cotton Mather.

Gaika's dusky Kaffir conscience is almost unanalysable to the European, but he had evidently come to the conclusion that the British Government, with all its vacillations and mistakes, was the best friend the native races had, and he died recommending his sons with his last breath "to hold fast the word of peace with the English." Makoma had perhaps tried to follow his father's advice, Pringle and Fairbairn evidently think so, and, I must say, his quiet submission to expulsions and

demands for compensation during these five years looks as if it were so ; but he was much irritated by his expulsion from the west bank of the Tyumie, which every Kaffir considered as beyond question Makoma's own country as far at least as the Gaga. He was now the most powerful chief on the Border, and could hardly submit to such an indignity without lowering his reputation in the eyes of his countrymen. He, therefore, resolved on war, and most of the minor chiefs, Tyali, Botumane, Eno, and others, who considered they had similar wrongs to avenge, joined him. Many also of the men of Hintsä, the paramount chief of the Amakosas, and some even of the Gunukwebes, though the mass of them with their chiefs stood aloof, took part in Makóma's rising.

The immediate occasion of the war was some shooting on the part of a military patrol and the seizing of a chief's cattle, but the tribes were now ready and the night following signal fires all over the country told that the Amakosas were rising. Ten days afterwards, on 21st December, 1834, some ten or twelve thousand warriors invaded the Colony, burning the farm-houses and driving off the cattle as far west as Uitenhage. Considering its vast dimensions, however, the raid was not so destructive to life as might have been expected. Twenty-two farmers, Dutch and English, were murdered, but women and children were allowed to go untouched, and even

protected. Of the numerous traders in Kaffirland, ten were slain; but the missionaries all found protection amongst various chiefs, or were allowed to escape to the Colony. The distant missions amongst the Amatembu and Amapondo tribes were unmolested.¹ But the raid brought much loss and misery to the colonists. In Grahamstown alone there were nearly 2,000 destitute refugees.

The issue of the war, of course, was never doubtful. A strong force took the field, ultimately under the command of the Governor himself, Sir Benjamin D'Urban. It was a difficult and costly campaign, the Kaffirs declining to fight on open ground and retiring to strongholds in the bush from which it was not easy to dislodge them. But ultimately, after the death of Chief Hintsa, who was slain under somewhat doubtful circumstances, his son Kreli and, some months later, the other chiefs submitted.

And now for a moment it seemed as if the everlasting problem of a Border policy was to be solved. Sir Benjamin announced a new and bold policy of annexation. The eastern boundary of the Colony was to be extended to the Kei River, and the Kosa tribes on this side of it were to be brought under the British law, such of them at any rate as would peaceably acknowledge British authority; their chiefs were to be controlled by resident agents and were to be kept

¹ See *Missionary Register*, 1836, p. 66.

in order by numerous military forts which Sir Benjamin built and garrisoned at different points in the district. A considerable portion of the new territory, consisting of the old land ceded by Gaika and a tract between the Buffalo and Nahoon Rivers, was to be distributed at once amongst the colonists. It was a bold policy, with some difficulties ahead of it, but it was a very popular policy with the colonists. "Never since the days of Father Tulbagh," says Dr. Theal, "had a South African Governor been as popular as Sir Benjamin D'Urban."

But however agreeable the policy of expansion was to the frontier farmers, there were men of influence in South African affairs who thought it was not a just one or likely to have good results, enforced as it must necessarily be by armed intimidation, and including, as it did, the occupation of lands the Kaffirs had long considered as their own. That energetic man, Dr. John Philip, threw himself into the cause of the Kaffir as he had done into that of the Hottentot, and along with Fairbairn, of the Capetown *Commercial Advertiser*, headed a small but influential party who opposed Sir Benjamin's policy from this point of view. Dr. Philip, with his indomitable energy, took the very best course to ensure attention to his views from the Home Government. He went over to England taking with him two petty chiefs, one of whom, Jan Tshatshu, had been educated at the Bethelsdorp

mission, and had laboured as a missionary assistant for many years at his father's kraal near the Buffalo River.¹ The other was a very intelligent Gona Hottentot. With these interesting specimens of the native he went on a tour through England, attracting, of course, crowds of people and exciting great enthusiasm. It seems to have been very different from Kicherer's exhibition of his poor, modest half-breed Hottentots, singing hymns and undergoing catechism in the doctrines. The Kaffir chief has great dignity of bearing and a capacity for appreciating the sentiments and ideas of a civilised race. It was easy to impress the British public with the injustice of treating such men as intractable savages and beyond the pale of law. Tshatshu and Andries got evening coats made for them, sat gravely through solemn dinners at the houses of presidents and patronesses of the Philanthropic Societies and were the lions of a season. More serious still, they were called upon to give evidence before a committee of the House of Commons then considering the question of natives in the British colonies.

I have no doubt Dr. Theal is right in thinking that the appearance made by the chiefs had a considerable effect on the Government, but mainly because the spirit of the time and the mind of Lord Glenelg, formerly the Hon. Charles Grant, then

¹ His father had refused to join Makoma in the recent war.

secretary for the colonies and a prominent philanthropist, were already strongly set in favour of a non-expansive policy and full recognition of native rights. Lord Glenelg therefore decided for a reversal of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's policy. He complained to Sir Benjamin that the original cause of the Kaffir raid had not been made sufficiently clear to him. (No clearer, probably, than it stands to this day in Dr. Theal's pages.) He spoke of the systematic injustice of which the Kaffirs had been the victims, and declared that a conquest resulting from a war in which, as far as he could judge, justice was on the side of the conquered, must be renounced. The colonists must be recalled to the boundary of the Keiskama and Tyumie Rivers, as fixed by Lord Charles Somerset in 1819. Treaties were to be made with the Kaffir chiefs and they alone were to be applied to for restoration of stolen cattle. Retaliatory raids were to cease, and the law of following the spoor was placed under the strictest limitations.

The principles of Christian charity and humanity on which Lord Glenelg based his policy, were not inconsistent with considerations of a more political though still large and liberal character. The annexation of Kaffirland this side the Kei *to the Cape Colony* at that time meant the immediate partition of parts of it amongst the colonists, and the prospect, as it seemed to Dr. Philip and his party, of further and perhaps

complete partition. Such a policy was certain to make the Kaffir hopeless and desperate, to impoverish him and drive him back on the territories already occupied by other Kaffir tribes further east, and bring about exterminating wars both with the colonists and amongst themselves. That meant ruin to those fair visions which the evangelical and philanthropic circles of that time cherished of the Kaffir, disciplined and educated, taking his place amongst the redeemed of the nations.

But while Lord Glenelg's policy was meant to give the Kaffir a chance, the prospect of a future, it failed to make any provision for the Boer's desire and need of expansion. On this point one of the ablest of the Wesleyan missionaries, Mr. Boyce, gave a very clear exposition of the situation in a pamphlet, *Notes on South Africa*, which he published in 1839. On the question of the Border policy indeed the Wesleyan missionaries generally, like those of the Glasgow Society, have been represented by Dr. Theal as complete supporters of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and entirely opposed in their opinions to Dr. Philip and the missionaries of the London Society. This was not exactly the case, although it is true that the attitude of the Wesleyan missionaries was peculiar and not very well understood at the time, especially by the Societies at home. Their chief mission stations lay outside the bounds of the

colony in Kaffirland, some even amongst the Kaffirs living beyond the Kei, and they knew of course that these stations would be much more secure and prosperous under British jurisdiction than when dependent on the precarious grace of a savage chief. They even found it difficult to retain the services of their best converts at their stations, as these, as soon as they realised the superiority of British justice and the security it gave them, were in the habit of crossing into the Colony in order to be, as they said, *onder de wet*, under the law. Hence Mr. Boyce, and some at least of the Wesleyan missionaries, were in favour of a limited measure of annexation, on condition, however, that there should be no dispossession of the Kaffirs by the settlement of colonists on their territory.¹

The attitude of the Wesleyan missionaries was appreciated by none of the parties at that time. As apparently favouring annexation it was an offence to the evangelical party and their own friends at home ; it led to a misunderstanding with Sir Benjamin

¹ Dr. Theal states roundly (*History of South Africa*, vol. iv., p. 34) that the Wesleyan missionaries "supported the Government and the colonists" in their policy. The whole body of them, however, in a formal document, dated 13th May, 1837, denied that, and explained that their approbation of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's policy only applied to the justice of the war he had made on the Kaffirs and not to his scheme of annexation. See Boyce, *Notes on South Africa*, Appendix.

D'Urban ; and to the frontier Boer it meant nothing practical. It was to clear up this ambiguous position that Mr. Boyce wrote his able review of South African affairs at this time, in which he pointed out clearly the real character of the problem the Government had to deal with. The trekking habits of the Boer, he stated, arising "in part from the influence of natural causes," made territorial expansion inevitable, and this expansion if conducted by private individuals, free from all legal control, was sure to prove injurious to the native tribes, to the trekkers themselves, and to the Colony. In his opinion, therefore, the Government had the alternative either of interfering now and preventing evils which must arise from this uncontrolled migration into the interior, or of interfering eventually under the most unfavourable circumstances, after all the mischief possible has been effected. His idea was to regulate the settlement of the trekking Boers in such a way that only the unoccupied lands of the interior (the extent and situation of which he is at pains to describe) would be taken up without injury to the natives. He concluded his review with a powerful appeal to the British Government to recognise and accept at once the responsibilities which must eventually devolve upon it.

Duties of a complex nature (he writes), differing considerably from the ordinary routine of official life, are the result of our

position on a vast continent, with powerful and barbarous nations in our vicinity. We are to them and to their future interests, a power mighty for good or for evil, for their conservation or for their destruction. Were we now merely contemplating a scheme of colonisation in a new country, conscientious and timid men might be expected to shrink from the undertaking, the benefits of which were encumbered with so tremendous a responsibility. But in South Africa we are already committed. We cannot recede. Our power will advance, and that within a few years, as far as the tropics. It rests in part upon our present measures whether this power in its triumphant march, exercise a malign and withering influence, or whether it shall dispense in its train the blessings of Christianity and civilisation, which are for the healing of the nations. To adopt the powerful language of Doctor Philip as just as it is eloquent, in reference to this very subject, "An able Governor of the Cape might in twelve years influence the continent of Africa as far as the tropic: influence it for good, make every tribe to know its limits, to be content with its own, to respect its neighbours, and to drink with eagerness from the fountains of our religion, civil policy and science. The missionaries have already done enough to prove that all this is not only possible, but easy."

Mr. Boyce's magnanimous conception of an Imperialist policy in South Africa was too much for any British Government of that day, which had to face the formidable criticism of the rising Manchester School of politics. It has only been slowly, and driven by force of circumstances that the British Government and people have come to understand the responsibilities they assumed along with that valuable naval station at the Cape. The *gran rifiuto* or withdrawal of Lord Glenelg was not to be the last in the history

of British rule in South Africa. But even if the policy of Lord Glenelg had been a sound one in itself, the time was unpropitious for carrying it into effect. The Kaffirs had been guilty of a murderous raid on the Colony, and the sudden change from a punitive policy to one of withdrawal and concessions was sure to be misunderstood by them and regarded as a proof of weakness. The very first year of the new policy, 1837, was distinguished by a decided increase in the amount of cattle stolen by Kaffirs from the farmers and on account of the stringency of the new laws regarding reprisals and the mode of following the spoor, a smaller percentage of these could be recaptured. The situation was undoubtedly a difficult one, requiring some patience on the part of the British and Dutch colonists who dwelt near the frontier, and perhaps more self-restraint and subdual of old Boer and Kaffir habits than could be expected all at once, or for many a day yet, on the Border. Lord Glenelg's policy of recognising the complete independence of the Kaffir tribes and making treaties with them, did not turn out very successful even as regards the pacification of the Kaffirs themselves, and eventually, ten years afterwards, it was abandoned under the administration of Sir Harry Smith, who advanced the eastern boundary of the Colony to the Keiskama and the Tyumie Rivers, but made the territory east of that a Kaffir reserve under the

British crown and the control of a British commissioner, leaving to the chiefs, however, the government of their tribes in all the ordinary affairs of life.

Lord Glenelg's policy, then, must be written down as unsuccessful, at least as far as its immediate purpose was concerned. Nevertheless, however much historians like Dr. Theal may sneer at the idea, I believe that its evident and undeniable desire to do justice to the Kaffir and give him the chance of a future must, in the end, have counted for something in making British rule of the native states a success, and even for something in the eyes of the Dutch who remained in Cape Colony. There are failures which are as respectable in the history of nations as their successes.

But whatever virtues might have been supposed to lie in Glenelg's policy, the frontier Boer was not in a mood to wait patiently for its effects. He had no sympathy with philanthropic views regarding the future of the native races, or with the idea that the rights of the Kaffirs to the land they dwelt on ought to be respected. He felt himself aggrieved by the policy of withdrawal, all the more that the prize he had been always coveting seemed at last within his grasp. In some cases he had already built his house, constructed his dam and planted his vineyard in the new territory, when he was recalled by the mandate

of the British Government. He seems to have judged also, and not without reason apparently, that the security of stock on the frontier would be rather less under the new arrangements than it had been before. The announcement of the new policy reached South Africa early in 1836. For six years before small parties of trekking Boers had been making their way into the interior, but it was in 1836 that the "great trek" began in earnest.

One fact speaks for itself. More than ninety-eight per cent. of the great trek, from 1836 to 1839, came from the old district of Graaff-Reinet, which had now, however, had three new districts, Uitenhage, Albany and Somerset, carved out of it. All the old names of the men of Brintjes Hoogte, Bothas, Krugers, Erasmuses, Jouberts, Trenchards, are amongst the first trekkers. When the example was once set, the pastoral Boer's love of expansion and habit of feeling himself overcrowded when he could see the smoke of his neighbour's chimney, would of itself have furnished many followers. He was a born trekker; every year the long line of his waggon, wives and children accompanying him, might be seen on the way to Capetown, which was 500 miles from the frontier, or jogging north, in the wet season, to the deserts of the Karoo then blossoming for a month with wild flowers and pasture. To trek forth into new lands, even if it had inconveniences, was not quite the same thing to him as it would be to

a band of Eastern American or Canadian farmers emigrating in waggons to unexplored regions of the North West. Of course there was the danger of the Kaffir, the Matabele to the North, and the Zulu on the rich pasture-land between the mountain ranges and the sea. But generations of warfare had made bush-fighting a natural art to the trek-Boer ; and he knew that as long as his band kept together, his long range elephant gun was a match for a thousand assegais. The trek into the interior was a venturesome one for the Boer, but it was not, I think, a desperate thing in his eyes.¹ There was much in it that was quite natural to him and part of his ordinary life.

¹ "We find ourselves in a position to confront and defy all our enemies" (*Moselekatse and the rest*). Piet Retief, then chief of the United Encampments at the Sand River, July 21, 1837.

XVII

Natural Causes of the Great Trek—Desire of the Migrating Boer to Escape from British Jurisdiction—Stephen Kay's Testimony.

WHEN Mr. Boyce, the Wesleyan missionary, writing on the spot, and from an intimate knowledge of the subject, spoke of the migration of the Boers as "arising in part from natural causes," he no doubt meant that the Boer's need or desire of expansion could find no further scope within the boundaries of the Colony after Lord Glenelg's declaration of his policy. Under any circumstances perhaps, it would have proved a difficult matter for the government to keep up with the growing requirements of the Boer in a matter of this kind. Nothing short of Mr. Boyce's plan of laying out the unoccupied interior could have done it, and that was much too magnificent a proposal for a British government of that time, with a Manchester School of politicians tugging at its skirts.

In new countries indeed government has usually followed rather than preceded the expansion of settle-

ments, as we see in the history of North America and Australia. But in these countries the pioneering settler was generally content that the government should follow him with its civilisation, with its legislation, its security and comforts, with its taxes and obligations. A few inveterate backwoodsmen at most might grumblingly move further on into the primeval forests when the woods about them began to grow thin with clearings. But in South Africa the peculiarity of the situation was this, that the expanding settlers were unwilling that the government should follow them, and from the first did what they could to prevent it following them. In other respects the great trek was at bottom a perfectly natural occurrence and would have taken place, though in a less dramatic form and with less protestation, sooner or later, under any government which was not prepared to take the unusual course of preceding instead of following the pioneer.

And now the question arises, what made the trekking Boer unwilling that the Government under which he had lived and under which the mass of his countrymen continued to live, should follow him?

The first and most evident reason was that the Government was felt to be alien in blood and speech, though nearly allied in both. The frontier Boer knew nothing of the condition of Europe. He did not even know, as was afterwards seen in Natal,

that Holland had ceased to count amongst the Powers, and that in consequence the Cape without British protection would have been at the mercy of any power that had 6,000 soldiers to spare for the purpose of securing the most important naval station on the route to the East. Even the Transvaal Boer of to-day knows too little of the world to realise that until the capitalists of the Rand poured wealth into the coffers of his government and enabled it to buy war material and organise itself on the scale of a great military power, the British Government with its ring of colonies and sphere of influence was his only effective protection against foreign interference and complications. Then, as now, the Boer understood nothing of the benefits he had received from British protection. This difference of blood and speech was certainly one of the reasons, and it seems to me was the only legitimate reason, for the trek-Boer's anxiety to cut himself loose from British rule and erect a state of his own in South Africa.

The second reason was that the pastoral Boer, with his rude way of life, disliked any form of civilised government which called upon the individual to pay taxes, accept restrictions, and conform to a standard for the general welfare. He thought he could get on without it. A semi-military organisation for commandos seemed to him all that was necessary.

Everybody is now aware of the necessity of securing a Hinterland from foreign occupation, but the matter was not so clear then, and the Colonial Government did nothing beyond protesting. But since that time the economic and commercial unity of South Africa below the Zambesi has now fully declared itself. The close political connection and interaction between all its states and communities, white and black, is as evident as that between the United States of America, and has an indestructible basis in the geographical unity which connects the plateaus of the interior with the coast lands and ports of Cape Colony and Natal. The nationality, besides, into which the Transvaal Boer refuses to be incorporated, is no longer that of an autocratically governed colony. It is a self-governing community, under protection of Britain, it is true, but Afrikaner in nationality, dual in language, and of mixed blood and traditions. His ambitions at the very least represent a dangerous element of sectionalism and have become a serious menace to the peaceful development of that nationality. He sees that the natural laws of economic progress are against him, and he stops their free play till his government becomes, as regards the other elements of Afrikaner nationality, a disgraceful tyranny. He has shown that he would, without hesitation, have imposed his rule on the British Colony of Natal. It is no longer possible to regard his ambitions as

sacred when they have become incompatible with the rights and safety of others.

But there was another and less creditable reason for the trek-Boer's anxiety to sever his connection with the British Government and its civilisation. Generations of a half-lawless life as the master of slaves and native servants had made him regard himself as the born lord and task-master of the coloured races in Africa, and his conduct as such had been just what, to use Olive Schreiner's comparison, the conduct of slave-holders and an absolute aristocracy has ever been, in Rome or Chaldæa, and all over the world. From the time of General Craig's remonstrance against the examination of slaves and natives by torture to the Emancipation Act, the British Government, British magistrates and British missionaries had been engaged in teaching him another point of view, and as regards the greater part of the Colony not perhaps without success. But the Boer of the frontier, at least, could not reconcile himself to the establishment of anything like legal equality between him and the native races ; and after the British immigration and the establishment of the new jury laws in 1827, legal equality between white man and black had become a stern reality to the Boers. As to the facts let the reader consider the following testimony of Stephen Kay, the Wesleyan missionary, as to what he saw with his own eyes in the district where he worked. Speaking of

the establishment of the new jury system in Albany, in 1828, he writes :

Upon this very important improvement in the administration of justice I cannot but dwell with peculiar delight ; and shall here give the particulars of two or three cases which have come under my own eye, and which may serve to exhibit the enlightened principles now in active operation Enough has surely been said in proof of the unrighteous conduct of colonists in former years towards the defenceless native ; and of the inveterate spirit with which he has long had to contend. His colour, his habits, and even his place of habitation, have all been used as grounds of argument to prove that he belonged not to the human family so much as to the more sagacious tribes of the quadruped race. To see him, therefore, called in evidence against his oppressors, or the latter made to feel the utmost rigor of the law for wantonly taking his life, cannot but constrain every lover of humanity to rejoice in the change already effected. Scenes of this kind are now frequently witnessed ; and the white of every grade in society is, from the bench, explicitly informed that with blood only can he atone for the crime of maliciously shedding the blood even of a Bushman. This, to many, is quite a new doctrine, and one which makes the ignorant nomad and slave-driver look about, like men just awake out of sleep. (*Researches and Travels in Caffraria*, page 432.)

Mr. Kay then gives his cases, which need not, however, take up our space here. The passage itself will sufficiently illustrate the conflict which was bound to arise between two such different standards of civilisation as that of the British Government, and that of the frontier Boer.

It was the missionary's great and legitimate

triumph, but it is almost a pity to see the naïve exultation of the good man, as he relates how Boers were condemned under the new penal laws side by side with Kaffirs and Hottentots, for, in the exulting account of the missionary, we begin to realise how bitterly the rude Boer of the frontier felt his altered position. And it was not only in his pride and supremacy of race that the Boer suffered. The change involved an economic loss to him. To get cheap labour had always been his grand object, and the only sure way to that end was to make labour compulsory, either by means of slavery or by vagrancy laws sufficiently stringent to put the native under the power of the white man. But the result of the Government's legislation, combined with the labours and the native settlements of the missionaries, had been to teach the Hottentots the advantages of independence, and Hottentot labour in consequence was neither so plentiful, nor procurable on as easy terms as before. It was not, as Boer writers pretend, the memory of Slachter's Nek, or the inadequacy of the compensation for the abolition of slavery, that was at the bottom of the trek-Boer's great anxiety to cut himself loose from the jurisdiction of the British Government; it was plainly the determination which that Government had shown to deal out equal justice between white man and black, and protect the latter against the

oppression of the former.¹ To this day that continues to be the fundamental difference between the standard of civilisation established in South Africa by the British Government and that maintained by the Transvaal Boer. What are the rights of the natives, and by what methods should you deal with them? Can the coloured man be educated and disciplined sufficiently to be dealt with on terms of legal equality at least, or must he be treated as one whose evidence and whose engagements are worth nothing, who must be disciplined as the beast of the field is disciplined? On this question the voice of the missionaries was clear, and it found its most powerful expression in the work of Dr. John Philip, the superintendent of the London Missionary Society. He can be educated and disciplined, that able and energetic advocate of the black man pleaded, and therefore the sooner you begin to treat him as a human being whose rights are sacred, the better. It was from this point of view that he opposed the free use of the reprisal system, the proposal for a Vagrancy Act, the policy of annexation.

But this view brought him, and the British Government with him, into irreconcilable conflict with the Boer of the frontier, with wild Jan

¹ Let the reader consider Articles 2 and 5 of the proclamation issued by Piet Retief, one of the leaders of the Great Trek, from this point of view. See Appendix A.

Bezuidenhout, who, as Dr. Theal represents him, was forbidden "by the law of honour" to accept it.

It is possible that the missionaries of that period were too sanguine regarding the complete civilisation of the African—I mean as to the time required for it. Amongst the Kaffirs and Hottentots they found many persons of high intelligence and capable of reaching all modern refinements of thought and feeling; and in their enthusiasm they sometimes seemed to speak as if they thought it needed only a generation or two till education and good treatment should raise the native races to a level with the whites; till, as Pringle sang,

"the long-scorned African,
His Maker's image radiant in his face,
Among earth's noblest sons shall find his place."

Their point of view may be illustrated by two statements which often occur in their writings; first, that the native children were found to be just as intelligent in the schools as those of the whites; and, second, that the percentage of blackguards was not higher among the Kaffirs than amongst some European nations.

But we have a long way to go yet, evidently, before such comparisons will be in order. The civilisation of a race is determined not by the capacities of some exceptional individuals, or even many exceptional individuals, nor by its capacity, up to a certain point,

for understanding a theorem, but by its collective ability to produce a state representation and establish a public opinion of what is best in itself and to maintain that as a moral order over all its individuals. And that collective power, which must always represent a general level, rises but slowly. But that it had a chance to rise at all amongst the native races of South Africa, was certainly owing to the labours of the missionary societies, and, most of all, to those of the London Missionary Society with its zealous three, Vanderkemp, Read and Philip.

XVIII

The Rights of Briton and Boer in South Africa determined by their work there—Defects of Dr. Theal's Histories of South Africa—Paul Kruger the Representative of the Old Traditions of the Frontier Boer.

THIS conflict between the civilisation of the Briton and that of the trek-Boer has had a long and varied history since 1836, and it has not quite ended yet, although Paardeberg has been won and the British flag flies over Pretoria. There have been mistakes, of course, and the question has been perplexed by the chronic tendency of the leaders of the Liberal party to evade and put aside, and even at times to lay down altogether the responsibilities of the Empire. But judging from the condition and conduct of the native tribes to-day, it is the policy of the British Government and that of Dr. John Philip, which history so far has justified in South Africa, and not that of the Boer of the trek. The policy of the latter and his habits, had they been free to develop unmodified by British influence, could only have ended in brutalising all the

racés in South Africa, including his own. That is an aspect of the question which the future historians of South Africa will have to take into account.

Great Britain's title in South Africa, then, is not so defective as some good people are ready to suppose. It seems to me that Dr. Theal has missed a great opportunity of explaining alike to Briton and Boer the different nature of their rights in South Africa—rights which are surely capable of adjustment when well understood on both sides ; the rights of the Boer as the first settler, the hardy pioneer, and founder of a unique civilisation which may yet come to be of value to the world, though at present the only outstanding types it has produced are the old Boer of the veldt, a hard-grained honest bigot, somewhat deeply streaked with touches of savage craft and cunning, and the young Boer of the cities, whose conceit is at least as remarkable as his hardihood and patriotism.

The rights of the Briton are not less valid. With much inferior claims as a settler, he has been the moving spirit of progress in South Africa, the mediator between its various races and the educator of the native ones ; he has been the support of all liberal and enlightened ideas, and at great expense of blood and treasure to himself has maintained a standard of law and justice there, which is on a par with that of the most civilised countries of Europe ; it is his

presence alone which, as far as one can see, has kept South African civilisation from developing into a tremendous slave-holding aristocracy with social and political features as bad as those of the Turkish Empire.

Unfortunately the historiographer of Cape Colony and official literary man of the British Empire in that part of the world has not comprehended his task or has been unfaithful to it. Perhaps the pressure of the party with which he has evidently allied himself has been too much for him and has spoiled what might have been one of the most instructive histories of the nineteenth century. For the spirit in which Dr. Theal has written his histories has been fatal to them. He has been obliged to avoid any thorough treatment of the great questions involved in the development of South Africa, the principles of civil and religious liberty, the management of the native races, the work of the missionary amongst the Kaffir tribes, the character and history of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the peculiar indifference with which it left the work of educating and disciplining the native races in South Africa to Outlander missionary societies, chiefly British ones ; the results of British influence in Cape Colony, and its present condition as compared with the civilisation of the Transvaal. He has been obliged to pass over these topics in silence or with a casual and fragmentary

remark, for the discussion of them would have set the history of the trek-Boer in its true light. His history is defective accordingly in philosophical analysis and survey. Even his economical summaries are of little value, partly from being at one time inadequate and undigested, and at another so evidently partial and polemical. It is a bad sign also, that he so rarely adopts the method of concrete representation, which gives the reader a chance of judging for himself, but prefers the old-fashioned method of general statements, with an uncommon scarcity of references to documents or of quotations from the original materials. It is a history really dead at heart, uninspired by any ideas or beliefs, for even Dr. Theal is hardly Boer enough to have any serious belief in the ideal of the Bezuidenhouts and their "law of honour," though he may write on occasion as if that piece of savagery were the same thing as the patriotism of a Tell, or that of the widow of Haarlem.

One thing, at any rate, is sufficiently clear from Dr. Theal's histories, namely, that they could hardly have been written by a historiographer of Cape Colony, unless something like an organised conspiracy under the protection of the predominant political party had existed against the British name and British traditions in South Africa. But these traditions are in many respects amongst the noblest

of the British Empire, and are not to be obscured so easily as Dr. Theal and Mr. Reitz may fancy. These traditions have been shared by many Cape Dutch families of the best class, who have contributed in the past much more to all that is best in the civilisation of South Africa than the wild race of the frontier. But owing to British neglect these traditions seem almost to have died out amongst the Cape Dutch. The surrender after Majuba Hill was of itself enough to kill them. Their only basis now in South Africa is the British population there. That population is the progressive and enterprising portion of South Africa, and could hold its own under any ordinary economic and constitutional conditions, but it cannot keep its ground against the military organisation, the gold and the despotism of the Transvaal. There should be no illusions now at any rate. The Transvaal has for twenty years been a centre from which British traditions and interests have been assailed with untiring perseverance and by deep-laid and long-maturing schemes, which but for the courage of Mr. Chamberlain would probably have been successful. You must kill Krugerism or abandon the British population of South Africa, British farmers, shop-keepers, and miners, to a system of Dutch Terrorism. And it is not easy to see any other way of extinguishing Krugerism than by taking away the independence of the Transvaal. Leave

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that existing, and what can you expect but to have the whole comedy acted over again, the Reitz-Theal propaganda, the nominal concessions and real evasions of franchise rights, the crafty terrorism, the huge and scientific military preparations and the calling in of Albrechts, Leyds, and a crowd of clever foreigners to conspire against you ; followed, of course, by the old disputes about the rights of a suzerain to interfere and protect itself, with half the Radical leaders working hard to make it impossible for you to anticipate or prevent anything ; the whole to end in a tragedy, as now, or possibly, the next time, in a catastrophe.

To leave the British colonists of Natal once again at the mercy of the Transvaal would be much the same thing as if Britain had abandoned the young and scattered English communities on the Atlantic seaboard of America, the men of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to struggle alone against the bold and vast designs of the French governors of Canada for making America a French continent.¹ Some people, with a head for economics, may say that Britain had a poor return for settling that matter by the conquest of Canada. I cannot think so. The presence of a great English-speaking people on the American continent, instead of a French or Dutch-speaking one, has been one of the latent factors in the maintenance and development of the British

¹ See Parkman, *A Half Century of Conflict*, vol. ii. p. 44.

Empire, and, in spite of the New Americanism, which is not quite so wild a thing as it looks to be, is so at this day.

At any rate the lesson of South African history from 1795 to the present time is clear enough. It is that nothing is gained by shelving difficulties and responsibilities ; they only accumulate with terrible interest. It was Emerson, the purest and most peaceable of men, who said that the terror and repudiation of war may be a form of materialism.

There are fine ironies in history. The conspiracy against its name and honour might have gone on unchecked and even unnoticed by the British nation, which has great faith in freedom of speech and an honest equanimity in the face of hostile criticism, had it not been for the arrogance of one man, who was rash enough to trample openly, ostentatiously, and perhaps quite needlessly for his chief design, on every principle of civil liberty and economic progress which the British nation has stood for in South Africa, and to end by throwing the gauntlet in its face. Paul Kruger is a living link between the Boers of to-day and the wild Jan Bothas and Bezuidenhouts of the past. He is a Boer of the Great Trek, a genuine son of the savage soil of Bruintjes Hoogte, with the fierce memories of the old Graaff-Reinet frontier still living in his heart, fresher probably than the things of yesterday. He is a man of another genera-

tion, more distant from the present than can be measured by the mere lapse of time. Behind that awful visage live rude and stern conceptions of human life inherited from men who knew Rarabe and Ndlambe, and whose waggons were the first to enter the passes of the Kaffir country. The distinctions and subtleties of modern civilisation can be nothing to such a man ; its watchwords of humanity, progress, freedom of speech, the whole creed of modern liberalism, with the Christian virtues at the head of it, but slight figments covering the moral antinomies of a life less natural in his eyes than a cattle-lifting raid or the moonlight revels of a Kaffir kraal. His public proclamations speak of a triune God, but the God he really knows and worships is the old Hebrew god of battles, the exterminator of the heathen. What is modern civilisation to him, with its characteristic agencies and exponents, the S.P.C.K., the great joint-stock company, with its machines on the Rand, the smart American journalist and his interviewing? Nothing but the buzzing of wasps about his ears ; nothing but what Joubert, writing in sympathetic Bantu idiom to a native chief, called " the stink of the English." All that he has any use for is comprised in its Creusots and Maxims. He is a unique figure for the nineteenth century to number amongst its remarkable rulers, a magnificent incarnation of the traditions of his race, which with-

out his personality would hardly have won so much consideration, or even notice, from the civilised peoples of Europe and America. The old lion (with much of the fox in him) of the race of Bruintjes Hoogte must be content with having secured that place in history for the traditions of the trek-Boer. And that is perhaps as much as they deserve, for they are not altogether of a kind to be a light to the path of civilisation in South Africa, or to merit perpetuation in its institutions.

APPENDIX A

PIET RETIEF'S PROCLAMATION

IN Chapter XI I referred to the much quoted Proclamation which Piet Retief issued when he led a trekking party from Graaff-Reinet in January 1837. Articles 2 and 5 illustrate particularly the offence which the Government's protective legislation for slaves and native servants had given to the Boer. "We complain," Mr. Retief says in Article 2, "of the severe losses which we have been forced to sustain by the emancipation of our slaves, *and the vexatious laws which have been enacted respecting them.*" Article 5 is very cautiously worded, the sagacious Boer knowing very well the complications which were sure to arise on the native question: "We are resolved that wherever we go, we will uphold the just principles of liberty; but whilst we will take care that no one is brought by us into a condition of slavery, *we will establish such regulations as will suppress crime and preserve proper relations between master and servant.*"

Piet Retief's proclamation had no claim to authority outside of the band of twenty-six families who accompanied

him, and indeed had no binding authority over them; and his ideas about slavery and other things were not necessarily those of other trekking parties. Their disagreements and dissensions were so great indeed that it was hardly possible to establish any responsible government amongst them. But the proclamation embodies Retief's ideas of the conflict between the Government and the Boers, and is carefully drawn up with a view of leaving the Cape Government no grounds for interfering with them, as far as that could be effected by the proclamation and its professions. Piet Retief, from everything we learn of him, was an honourable and courageous man, the highest type of burgher, moderate and wise in his ways. But it is impossible for any one who has studied the early history of Graaff-Reinet to believe that some of the professions in his famous proclamation have any very substantial meaning, or are much more than the expression of a pious hope which he knew could hardly be realised. Consider, for example, the professions in Articles 6 & 8:

(6) . . . "We will not molest any people, nor deprive them of the smallest property; but, if attacked, we shall consider ourselves fully justified in defending our persons and effects, to the utmost of our ability, against every enemy."

(8) "We purpose, in the course of our journey, and on arrival at the country in which we shall permanently reside, to make known to the native tribes our intentions, and our desire to live in peace and friendly intercourse with them."

But what, as a matter of fact, was Piet Retief proposing to

do when he published these fine words in the *Grahamstown Advertiser*? He was about to invade territories occupied by kindred tribes of his hereditary enemy, the Kaffir. And the Kaffir of Natal and of the plateau, knew perfectly well the character of his visitor, and was better acquainted even than we are with the whole history of that bitter warfare which the Boer had for years been carrying on against his Kosa cousin on the Fish River. When Piet Retief, therefore, at the head of a thousand Boer waggons descended through the Drakensberg passes into Natal, he must have known, just as well as Dingan, the Zulu chief of Natal, knew, what kind of a conflict had begun.¹ It might commence in apparently friendly preliminaries, it might be delayed, as Piet Retief tried, at the cost of his life, to delay it; but between these two races it was inevitable and certain to be relentless. No doubt Piet Retief would have preferred to settle quietly in the new region of the Tugela, and would have honestly tried to make his band live "in peace and friendly intercourse," as he says in his proclamation, with the Zulu Kaffirs. But could he reasonably expect to do so? There was the history of seventy years' conflict on the Fish River to show that it was impossible.

Dingan was cunning enough, though it is evident that neither party stood in much doubt as to what the end was to be, to inveigle Piet Retief, with sixty-six of his band, unarmed into his kraal, and slaughtered them, to the last man.

¹ Such was the forecast of Harris, who visited Moselekatse in 1836, Their course, he says of the trekkers, thus far has been marked with blood, and must end either in their own destruction or in that of thousands of the native population of South Africa.—*Expedition into South Africa*, p. 367, also p. 353.

The treachery of the Zulu chief was soon avenged by a commando of Boers under Andries Pretorius, who in their impregnable laager defeated an army of 12,000 Zulus, slaying over three thousand of them, with a loss to themselves of three men slightly wounded. That sounds, it is true, suspiciously like a Pretoria bulletin during the first half of the present war.

APPENDIX B

DR. THEAL'S LATEST VERSION

IN an introduction to the fifth volume of the *Records*, published in 1899, I notice that Dr. Theal makes something like an indirect and grudging admission of the benefits of British administration to the trade of Cape Colony. After having covered up and disguised the fact as much as possible for many years in his various histories, he permits himself at length to express it in the following ungracious manner; the italics are mine:

To produce an effect there must be a cause. Setting aside the few individuals within the official circle, what cause had the South African colonists in 1803 for attachment to Great Britain? . . . They had a larger market for their produce, but it unfortunately happened that *during a considerable portion* of the first English period the seasons were so bad that there was *little or nothing* to sell. A *so-called senate*, composed entirely of burghers, instead of mixed burghers and officials, was a gain, but its power was extremely limited. That the reform in the method of paying civil servants, relief from the irritating auction tax on petty accounts, and the abolition of *a few monopolies, such as the sale of meat*, combined with *the better market*, surely did not form *sufficient cause* to turn the affections of the people from their own mother country to another land where sympathy with them was entirely wanting. (*Records*, 1803—1806, p. 101.)

Perhaps not ; but one may be excused for asking if this is the proper manner for a historian of South Africa who claims to be impartial to acknowledge the great reforms introduced into Cape Colony by British rule ?

The reader will notice Dr. Theal's method of handling very important facts, the whole gamut, indeed, of civil and economic reforms, so as to belittle them. They had a larger market, but—"during a *considerable period*" "there was little or nothing to sell," &c. They had got a new popular body, the burgher senate, to represent their views [*a very effective body, indeed, in constant co-operation with the governor, its views always receiving consideration, and generally, as appears from the Records complied with*], but—its official power was limited. They had got reforms in the Civil Service, removing extensive corruptions which infected the whole state ; they had got relief from oppressive taxation ; they had been freed from the oppression of monopolies in their staple trades ; they had got practically a free market ; but, what was that to turn the affections of a people, &c. ? And in spite of all the reforms he admits in this paragraph to have been made, Dr. Theal seems not to have the slightest difficulty in stating on the previous page of the same work that "in the colony itself the effect of the English administration was *almost imperceptible*."

A universally corrupt system of levying taxes and paying officials banished to make room for a pure one ; just taxation substituted for oppressive taxation ; monopolies abolished and a freer and larger market afforded a rapid increase in trade and revenue ; and the effects of it, Dr. Theal says,

clearly against the testimony of these *Records*, "almost imperceptible !"

It may be prejudice on my part, but it seems to me there is a kind of daring duplicity in Dr. Theal's way of stating things, which reminds one strongly of the worst side of the Boer character. But at any rate a historian who is so obviously bent on stating one side only of the case should certainly withdraw, at the first opportunity, that solemn declaration in his preface to the *Story of the Nations* volume, that he was "guided by the principle that truth should be told regardless of nationalities or parties," and "strove to the utmost to avoid *anything like* favour or prejudice."

THE END

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